



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

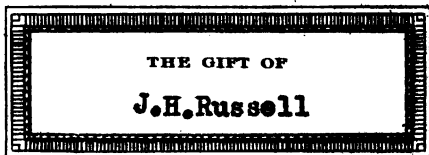
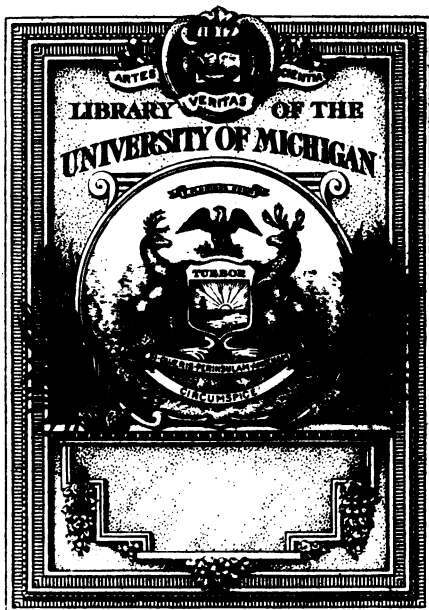
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

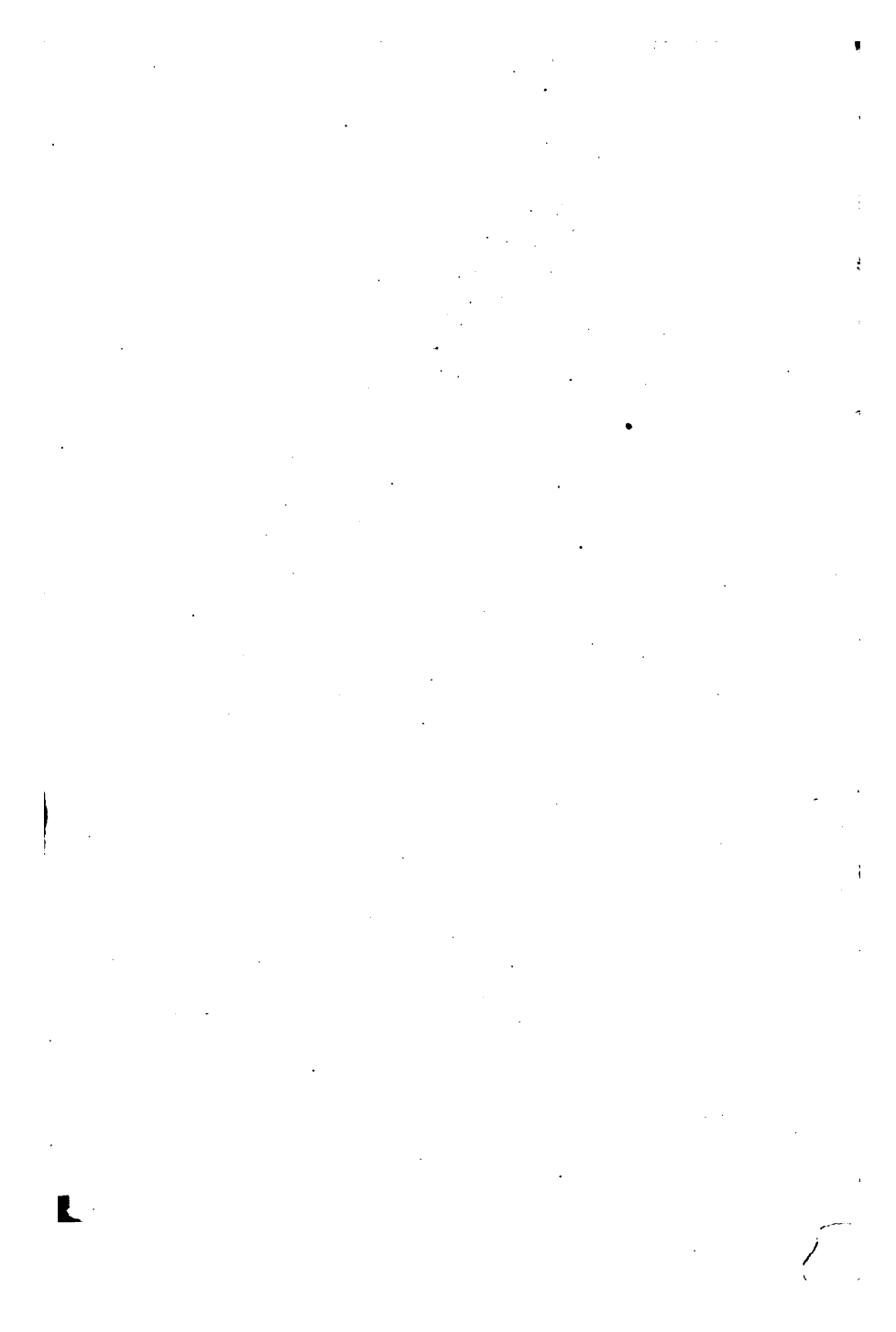
- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>







BV  
4255  
P35

**Gift of  
James H. Russell**

# BACCALAUREATE SERMONS

By  
ANDREW P. PEABODY, D.D., LL.D.,

*Preacher to the University and Plumer Professor of Christian  
Morals in Harvard College.*

---

BOSTON  
D. LOTHROP AND COMPANY  
32 FRANKLIN STREET

Copyright by  
D. LOTHROP AND COMPANY  
1885



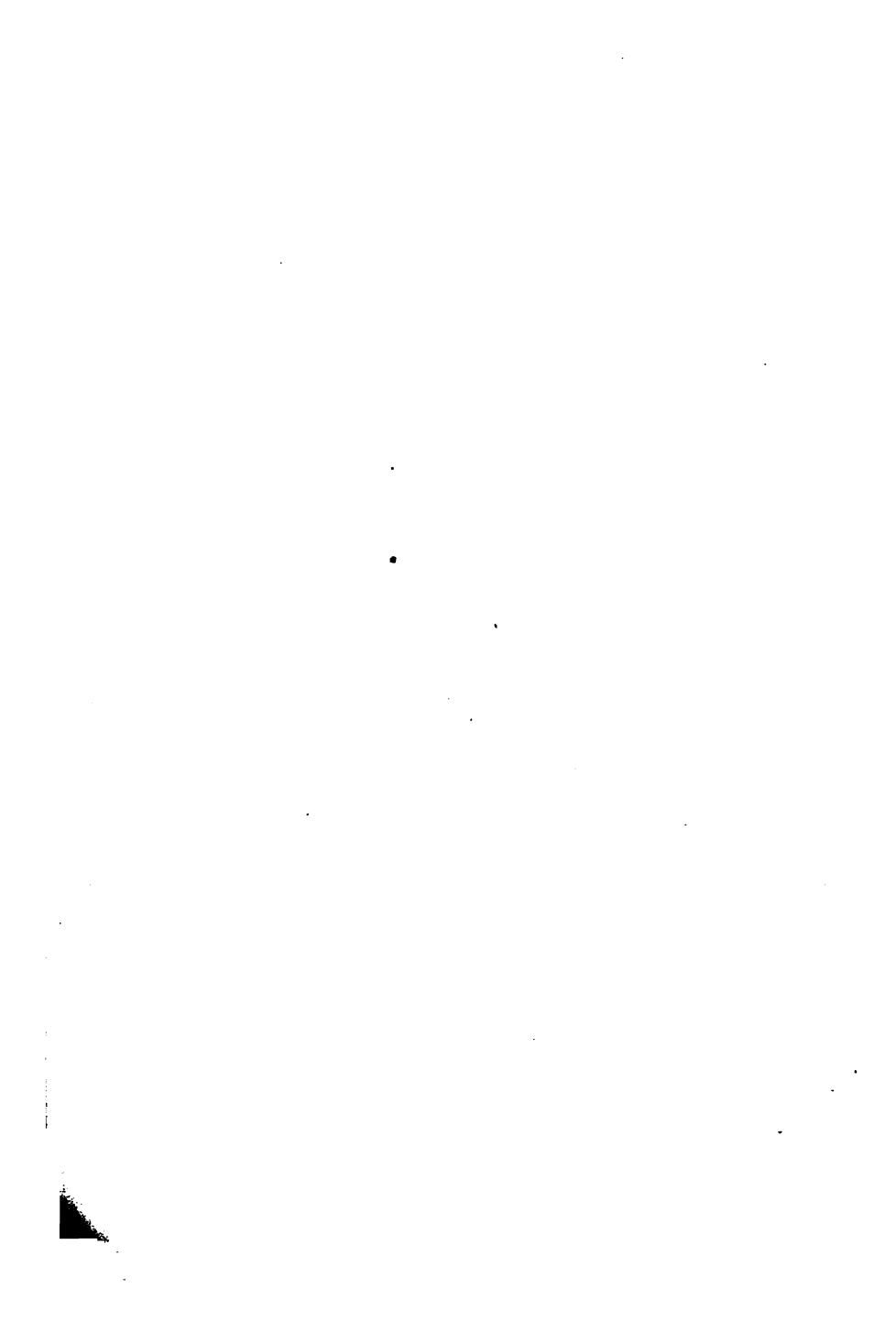


Gift  
JH Russell  
7-3-33

## PREFACE.

IN preparing these sermons for republication, I find that in some instances a favorite illustration, text of Scripture, or subsidiary thought occurs more than once. But as there is, as I believe, no duplication of a subject or of a continuous train of thought, I have preferred to let the sermons reappear in their original form. If they can in any humble measure serve the purpose with which they were written, the author can have no greater joy than in thus renewing and continuing the chosen work of his years of active service in the University.

10-6-33 HRS



## CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
I.	
Religion Unchanging in its Claims. (1861.) . . .	1.
II.	
Stability the Condition of Excellence. (1862.) . .	18.
III.	
The Christian Order of Nobility. (1864.) . . .	30.
IV.	
Approval and Choice. (1865.) . . . . .	44.
V.	
Manhood. (1867.) . . . . .	57.
VI.	
The Sovereignty of Law. (1869.) . . . . .	72.
VII.	
Authority. (1870.) . . . . .	86.
VIII.	
The Choice of a Profession. (1871.) . . . .	104.
IX.	
The True Aim. (1872.) . . . . .	119.
X.	
Treasures in Heaven. (1873.) . . . . .	136.

**CONTENTS.**

**XI.**

Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. (1874.) . . . . . 151.

**XII.**

Our Country's Perils, Needs, and Claims. (1875.) 166.

**XIII.**

Thought, Feeling, and Action. (1876.) . . . . . 185.

**XIV.**

Habit. (1877.) . . . . . 201.

**XV.**

Thorough Life-work. (1878.) . . . . . 217.

**XVI.**

The Cloud, and the Voice out of the Cloud. (1879.) 234.

**XVII.**

Science and Religion. (1880.) . . . . . 247.

**XVIII.**

Christo et Ecclesiæ. (1881.) . . . . . 264.

**XIX.**

Hospitality. (1883.) . . . . . 279.

# BACCALAUREATE SERMONS.

---

## I.

### RELIGION UNCHANGING IN ITS CLAIMS.

(1861.)

“Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.”—  
HEBREWS xiii. 8.

HE who would have addressed a graduating class in this University a century ago, would have assumed the paramount importance of Christ, and his religion as felt by his hearers, no less than claimed by himself. Christianity was then deemed by each and all the prime interest of each and all. Not that sincere Christian discipleship was universal; but those who were not Christians felt themselves almost pariahs,—outcasts,—in a condition in which they were afraid either to live or to die. The prevalent feeling now is—though perhaps it may not often find distinct utterance—that religion has lost something of its importance,—that it is of right a less engrossing interest than formerly,—that its claims should be pressed more modestly than they used to be,—in fine, that from a primary it has become a secondary concern.

Yet there can have been no essential change. Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. It is the fashion of the world, not the Sun of Righteousness, that shows an altered phase. As the unchanging stars have in one age diligent and painstaking observers, and in the next, it may be, none who devote themselves to their study; as in one century they are believed to govern human destiny, and are consulted about affairs great and small, and in the next, even their actual uses may be ignored,—so does Christ, always occupying the same unapproached eminence, hold a more or less prominent place in the regard of different generations, he and his religion at some epochs, standing in the foreground of men's thoughts and interests, and at some, almost crowded out of life by the pressure of secular excitement.

Ours, as I have intimated, is not a religious age. One chief reason for this unfortunate distinction is the inrush, the avalanche of worldly interests through the progress of art and science, especially through the agency of steam and electro-magnetism, giving us more to learn, to discuss, to hope, to fear, and often to do in a week than would have sufficed for a year of the slower life of the last century. It is the tendency of each individual to fall into the general habit of thought and feeling, and thus to regard religion as of the less importance because it has lost something of its former hold on the public mind.

Wishing to render my last opportunity of addressing those who are going from us of substantial service,—desirous of discharging an office, not of mere form, but of sincere and heart-felt friendship for a Class with which my connection will leave with me the most grateful and happy remembrances, I propose vindicating for religion its foremost place in your thought and resolution, in your purposes and plans of life.

1. Take first into the account your personal well-being. If you were going hence to lead quiet, secluded lives, I know that you would look to religion as a fit solace for your retirement; cut off from the world, you would not willingly live as orphans, but would rejoice to say, "I am not alone; for my Father is with me." But in the busy, crowded life in which most of you will find yourselves immersed, is not the soul as truly a hermit as it would be in a cloister? What has the whole outside world to do with your self-consciousness? When you ask, "What am I compared with what I ought to be? What have I of mind or heart that should make me happy?" do any answers reach you by railway, steam or telegraph? Do any accessions of inward wealth accrue to you from the multitude of affairs with which you are complicated? When you come to yourself in the night-watches, when introspection shall be forced upon you by illness or grief, or when, standing by the open graves of your co-

evals, you must think of your own death-hour, will you have any less need of conscious integrity and purity, of the pledged pardon of God for your sins, of the clear light of immortality made manifest, of the truths and hopes that flow from Jesus Christ, than is felt by the forsaken widow or the lonely octogenarian?

But you say, "I live so fast; I have such a pressure of engagements; new scenes and interests open so rapidly, that I can find no place for serious thought." Yet this crowded life is full of duties and responsibilities,—aye, of temptations too. You do not want to make shipwreck of your well-being, to become cheap in your own esteem, to lose your soul, or all that gives it dignity as a soul; and tell me, is there in your multiplied engagements any influence which has power to enforce the right, to impress your conscience with a profound sense of obligation, to make you dutiful and faithful? Or, rather, are there not influences of an opposite character? Are there not temptations of vast strength growing out of the busy life to which you are looking forward? Is there not intense need of force from within to repel these temptations, to neutralize these influences? And is there anything that can be of avail for this end, short of that consummate flowering and fruitage of Christian faith which is witnessed when the soul says, "My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go; as for me, I will serve the Lord?"



In fine, you cannot pursue any line of reflection, on which you can fail to admit that character is essential to your well-being, or on which you can derive such a character as you would rejoice in, from any source other than Christian faith and piety. Though the whole world beside were indifferent to Christ, he is the same to you as if all the world followed him. Your individual well-being is conditioned on your relation to him, and it has no other necessary condition. I know not, I care not, whether David was a poor shepherd-boy, looking up from the hillside on which his flock was feeding, to the stars and to Him whose palace they gem, or whether he was a monarch immersed in countless cares, when he sang, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I desire beside thee,"—the relation to God which these words imply is a truth wholly independent of time and of circumstance,—the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, to you, to me, and to all men.

2. I have spoken of your personal well-being. I would speak also of your social obligations; and on you especially may I urge them,—on you whom society has made so largely her beneficiaries,—on you who have enjoyed means of culture accumulated from the hard-wrung gifts of New England's early penury and the princely endowments of her palmy days,—on you to whom so much has been freely given by man, no less than by God, and to

whom your generation looks that you should render back a due return for the bounty of which you have been the recipients. On you, if on any, rests in full the duty of usefulness. But let me put to you the direct question,—Do you know of any mode of usefulness which is not Christian in its spirit and purpose, and in which you do not need Christian motives to prompt, guide and sustain you? Thus, you will be useful, most of all by your example. But how? Do I not utter the whole truth when I say that your example will be salutary just so far as you practise the precepts of Jesus,—bad and pernicious, just so far as you depart from them? In making your example what it should be, you will encounter temptations so strong that neither your native force of character, nor any stress of lower motives, can resist them,—which you will be able to overcome only by bracing yourself back against an assured faith in immortality, the sense of the present God, and the paramount desire for his approval. There will be many occasions on which you will feel the need of omnipotent motives. As regards that rigid uprightness, fidelity and diligence, by which alone you can so fill your part in life as to profit those among whom you dwell, is there any force always active, always sufficing, always on the right side, except the thought that you are doing God's work, beneath "the great Taskmaster's eye," and under his inevitable law of retribution? How is every

generous impulse energized, and the whole power of usefulness enhanced, when you feel that you are not your own, that you are redeemed by the precious blood of the great Sacrifice, and that in all you do for others, you are but rendering back such fragmentary instalments as an insolvent can pay of a debt absolutely infinite! Now, this entire apparatus of usefulness is not of more value at one time than at another; it is part and parcel of the religion, the Gospel, the love of Christ, and, like him, the same yesterday, to-day and forever.

3. Again, when I remember that you have already been bereaved; when I reflect that it would be almost without precedent should your Class appear for the first time without stars in the Triennial Catalogue, I ought to remind you that death levels all distinctions, not only of social standing, but equally of ages and conditions in the world's history. It is the same event now that men ignore it till it steals upon them, that it was when it was kept perpetually in view, when it was the unvarying theme of pulpit, and social gathering, and lonely thought, and when, under sombre religious ministrations, and the deep gloom which they spread over the community, there were multitudes, "who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." I confess that, in every worldly point of view, death looks terrible to me. This is so good and happy a world; every day brings with it so much to be enjoyed; there

are so many unsolved problems in which I am deeply interested, in the nearer and more remote future; there are so many mines of literature and science which I long to explore; there is so much work that stretches out, in my desire, beyond the limits of an ante-diluvian pilgrimage,—that it sometimes seems to me a thought full of unutterable melancholy, that I have passed the meridian of my earthly being, and am hastening down the western slope of my brief day,—to what? To an eternal sleep? To be as if I had never been? I cannot say positively from the analogies of nature. Nor does the nineteenth century, with its boastful civilization, possess a single extra-Christian argument for immortality which was not at the command of that greatest philosopher of antiquity who said, “As to a matter about which there is so much uncertainty, it does not become us to be too confident.” Only one star of hope shines over the grave, even that which shone over the manger of Bethlehem. He who there slept on the virgin mother’s bosom alone has abolished death, and tracked the path of living light through the valley of its shadow.

The busy, care-cumbered life to which you will go forth changes not in the least the aspect of death, though it may make you unaware of its surely advancing footsteps. Jesus alone transfigures it, so that you may look into the face that has been worn by the King of Terrors as if it were an

angel's countenance. So long, then, as you are in the great procession that moves ever on from dust to dust, the indifference of those around you cannot make it of one whit the less momentous importance that you verify, each for himself, those words of the Lord, "He that believeth in me shall never die." While death reigns over all, Jesus, the Conqueror of death, is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

I have thus sought to commend to you the only foundation for your well-being and usefulness in life,—for your hope in death.

As you leave us, I cannot but feel the profoundest interest in your future. I cannot but desire the more earnestly for you the best gifts of mind and heart, when I reflect on the condition of our country, so sadly changed from that to which you might reasonably have looked forward at the beginning of this academic year. If the country in her union and prosperity claimed the honor and love of the youth whom she had nurtured, much more does she now, betrayed, distracted, imperilled, demand the loyal and devoted service which is her need no less than her right. Some of your number are already pledged to the defence of her flag. Should her exigencies demand a like sacrifice of all the flower of her youth and the pride of her strength, I trust that those who go from these halls will not be behind the foremost at her call; but at present, and in any aspect of the future that now seems

probable, I should hesitate to urge this mode of service upon those whose special training has not been for the arts of war, but for the highest places and duties of peaceful life. In the dilapidation of all our dearest home-interests that must attend the conflict while it lasts, there is a stronger demand than ever for fresh vigor and uncorrupt integrity in such professions as lie open before you, in such trusts as must soon be given to your charge. While the war-fiend wastes, be it yours to strengthen that which remains, and to build up that which falls to decay. Vigorous minds and earnest, loyal hearts are demanded at the bar, where rights endangered in the general straitness and distress shall plead for recognition; by the bed of illness, where many a worn and weary spirit will weigh down the suffering frame; in the pulpit, whence must go forth at once consolation for the depressed, the anxious and the bereaved, and the trumpet-tones of Christian patriotism for those struggling beneath the public burdens; in all the higher departments of social life which will afford fewer posts of lettered ease than before, but only the larger sphere for industry, energy, pure example and holy influence. Nor can this war, though in defence of the most sacred rights, close without leaving in its train causes of general demoralization, which will work as long as you live, and will

- claim from you, as educated men, as rightfully succeeding to high places in the public confidence,

the loftiest type of personal virtue,—loyalty to your God no less than to your country.

Such is your calling, and you can meet it, only as inspired and energized by the everlasting Gospel,—by the strength and love of the Redeemer,—by Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

I now bid you farewell, in the solemn import of the word. Your well-faring depends, under God, on yourselves,—on your deliberate choice of his law and service,—on your consecration of every power and affection to the Father and the Saviour of your souls. With this you will, you must fare well. Perhaps not by any worldly standard. Some may prosper visibly; some may seem to fail. But in the pursuit of the supreme end of your being, there is no failure. On this career loss is gain, disappointment is success, death is life.

Accept with my farewell the warm expression of my sincere regard for you, and of my interest in you, individually and as a Class. May the Lord bless you and keep you! May His guardian Providence and His guiding Spirit go with you on your life-path! May He make you blessings to those among whom He shall appoint your service, and blessed in your allegiance to Him, and in your faithfulness in all that He shall give you to do; and may you so acquit yourselves of your work on earth, that its witness shall be in heaven, and its record on high!

## II.

### STABILITY, THE CONDITION OF EXCELLENCE.

*g.m.* (1862.)

“Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.”—GENESIS xlix. 4.

THIS text unites two ideas that at first thought might seem mutually incompatible,—stability and progress; for to excel implies progress. It makes the latter, indeed, contingent on the former,—progress or excellence on stability. But stability, as applied to mind and character, does not denote immobility; it excludes only the movement which is not progress. It cuts steps in the solid rock on the ascending way of truth and goodness, and plants the feet firmly in those last made till still higher steps are cut deep enough for a secure foothold. It does not discard old opinions because they are old, but only because they are proved false, which they seldom are; for the mind grows, for the most part, not by the rejection of established opinions, but by the development from them of higher, larger, more comprehensive views.

It is by the stable minds and characters of each successive generation that the collective mind and conscience advance toward maturity. The strong



intellects and noble hearts of each generation remain, with few exceptions, loyal adherents to the best views, the highest principles, the nearest approximate truths of their early maturity. They in their youth and prime are pioneers in the onward movement toward the ground which they are the first to occupy; while in after-life they exercise the no less important function of repressing precipitancy, moderating excess, tempering extreme opinions and measures, and keeping the old way-marks erect and visible till the new are fully established and recognized. Thus the engineers and firemen of one generation become brakemen for the next, and were it not for their agency the onward rush would be destruction, not progress. But I cannot now follow out this train of thought, which at another time we might pursue with interest and profit.

The occasion invites to considerations more closely personal. You who are about to leave us have various careers in view, but you have one desire in common,—that of *excelling*, that is, of success and honor in your respective professions and vocations. I would now present to you stability as the essential condition of your well-being and well-doing. “Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel.” The most brilliant talents, without fixed opinions, principles, and purposes, will only make your failure the more complete and disastrous. I can, then, perform no better service for

you than to define some of the traits of that stability of character which will insure your excellence.

I would, first, urge upon you the intense importance of fixed religious convictions. I do not here refer to the technical dogmas which divide sect from sect, but to those primal truths which lie at the basis of the religious character. I would not have you to understand that I even suspect the existence among you of what commonly bears the name of infidelity. But there is a practical infidelity, which, so far as its influence on the life is concerned, is not less to be dreaded than the express denial of religious truth. There is a state of mind, in which this entire realm of thought is ignored, relegated into some uncertain future,—in which the soul says to itself,—“Here is this outward, visible system of things, in which I know that I live, in which I must make my way by my genius, industry, or good fortune, and whose prizes may elude my pursuit if I loiter for one moment on the race. As for the ideal region of Christian faith, it will be time enough for me to enter upon it when I have made sure of my position in the actual world.” What I would have you do is to reverse these conceptions of the ideal and the actual. Your earthly future may be all ideal, and at best only a small portion of what it is in your imagination can ever be realized. But religion deals only with realities; it has no place except in

the actual world. If God is, his being is not an abstract and remote truth, but the nearest and most vital fact of your own being. He exists not, without standing in more intimate relations to you than any one of his creatures can hold. If he is filling for you the cup of gladness and hope that you lift hourly to your lips without lowering its level, if he feeds the gladness of your youth, and hangs upon your life-tree these blossoms of rich promise which already in your thought are ripening into golden, luscious fruit, then must gratitude to him be the foremost of all duties, and it cannot be innocently intermitted or scantied. If he has in Jesus Christ uttered counsel and warning, promised forgiveness and help, thrown around you the arms of everlasting love, then is loyalty to your Saviour an obligation which you have no right to set aside. And if the law of eternal retribution works upon you independently of your own choice, so that every successive present moment projects its light or its shadow into the far-off future, it is high time that you were living for that inevitable future.

Be not, then, satisfied with the vague assent to the truths of religion, which indeed is not an assent, so much as a waiving of the whole subject; but let me beseech you to fix these truths in your hearts as inseparable elements of your consciousness. Hardly will you have gone from these walls, when the great life-questions will begin to press

themselves upon you,—questions to which, as mere citizens of this world, you will give entirely different answers from those which you will give as God's children, as Christ's disciples, as heirs of immortality. You stand "at the parting of the way, where the two ways meet," whence they diverge, imperceptibly at first, but surely and rapidly, and will almost meet but to part again at the right and the left hand of Him who will judge the world in righteousness.

In urging upon you the necessity of fixed religious opinions, I cannot forget that at the present time loose and vague views with regard to the sources of truth, the authority of the Christian Scriptures, and even the distinctively divine character of our Saviour, are largely prevalent among persons who still call themselves Christians. But, with your liberal culture, you have no right to such views. The flimsy naturalism which seeks shelter under the Christian name, yet disclaims the authority of Jesus, and assigns to him barely an honored place among the good men and wise teachers of antiquity, is as irrational as it is irrelevant; while, on moral grounds, open, bold infidelity is immeasurably preferable to it, as being the honest, manly profession of an open enemy, not the treachery, the hypocritical kiss, the stab in the dark, of a secret foe. The question of Christianity has but two sides. The religion of the New Testament expressly claims to be received as a divine

revelation; and if it is not this, it can be nothing else than a base imposture. If you will try the issue between these, the only tenable hypotheses, by the laws of evidence which you regard as valid, on all other subjects, I know that you will say with the apostle who remained faithful when others went away from Jesus, "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." A heavier calamity cannot rest on a human being than is involved in the rejection of divine revelation; for it is an abandonment of the soul, in all its vast, its infinite concerns, to its own native ignorance and helplessness,—a condition in which I see not how one could either wish to live or dare to die. But I fear this for you only in the event of your resigning the exercise of your own powers of thought, and yielding yourselves passively to speculations which have not even anything new about them, except the anomalous position of those who give them currency, as professed disciples of Him whose power over the hearts of men they are seeking to destroy. I say "not anything new"; for the pretentious scepticism of our time is barely the furbishing of weapons that have been long ago broken and blunted by the impregnable shield of faith, and of defensive armor that has been riddled through and through by the sword of the Spirit. The world has no more outgrown Christianity

than it had eighteen centuries ago, and at this moment the greatest minds in existence are offering it the same homage which the wise men of the East rendered to the infant Redeemer. I have yet to learn that infidelity or naturalism within the pale of Christendom has nurtured a single character which you would wish to make your own; while Christianity has trained thousands upon thousands whose praise you would gladly emulate.

Above all things else, it is my earnest desire that you should fix your choice, and take your irrevocable stand as Christians. The stable character can be built only on the Rock of Ages. Thus built, the floods of temptation will assail it in vain. The trials of life can only test its strength and minister to its growth. It will stand unmoved, though all the powers of earth and hell conspire to subvert it. It will stand when the river of death sweeps over it, and from a humble earthly structure, erected with toil and care, it will tower into "a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

In the next place, I would have your stability insured by fixed moral principles. I would have you feel that right and wrong are not questions of chronology or geography, but the same for every country and age,—inherent distinctions in the Divine mind, in the moral universe, in the essential nature of things, and the character and tendency of actions. What is termed in the most superficial

sense a good character, essential as it is, is of far less vital moment at the entrance into life than is the possession of fixed and inflexible principles. A (so-called) good character is sometimes a mere parasitic growth, with no root of its own, and consequently incapable of living by itself. I apprehend that it is no uncommon thing for one to derive his notions of right, not from his own conscience, but from the average standard of his intimate associates. He has no moral opinions or preferences of his own, but wishes and means to stand well in the estimation of others. He who goes out into the world with no higher principle than this, even though he have as yet formed no vicious habits, is in imminent peril. His chameleon type of morality must sooner or later almost inevitably come into contact with a degraded state of moral opinion and practice, and cannot but receive its foul and sooty impress. A circle of unscrupulous fellow-students or fellow-travellers, the companions of a single ocean-passage, a sojourn of a few weeks among the more corrupt portion of reputedly respectable society in a great city or at a fashionable watering-place, will suffice to efface whatever semblance of virtue he once had ; and the cry of indignant surprise will go forth at the sudden dilapidation and ruin of so excellent a character, when in fact there was no structure to be dilapidated, no beauty or excellence to be ruined, his seeming goodness was in no sense his own, and he was like

a city broken down and without walls, open to the inroad of whatever enemy might seek a lodgement there.

Be it yours to listen, each for himself, to the voice and will of God, to search for the waymarks of duty, and to choose such principles as you are willing to abide by before the Divine tribunal, and to depend upon for your destiny in the unseen world. I would urge you also to let these principles cover the whole of life. Leave not any important questions in morals to be decided as the feeling of the moment may dictate. Diminish to the utmost degree possible the debatable ground between the positively right and the absolutely wrong. Restrict as far as you can the range of morally indifferent actions. And do not trust yourselves close upon the confines of acknowledged wrong and evil. Make no forays on the doubtful territory on which rigid moralists would forbid and lax moralists would license your quest of recreation or pleasure ; for this territory is Satan's chief hunting-ground,—it is here more than anywhere else that the Arch-enemy seeks and finds whom he may devour. Above all, in matters of right and wrong, yield to no conscience but your own,—to no sanction of respected example or commended virtue, to no authority of name or precedent. Accept no substitute for your own sense of duty, until you find a substitute who can take your place before the Divine judgment-seat, and to whose



shoulders you can transfer from your own the penalty of a violated conscience.

Let me next exhort you to stability as regards your aims and plans in life. There is one aim to which you will infer from what I have said that I would assign the foremost place, namely, that implied in the Divine words, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Seek, first and chief of all, the character which shall insure for you the favor of God, and merit that of man, and let all your other plans and pursuits be determined in subserviency to this. These words of the Lord would bid you, negatively, to engage in no pursuit, however attractive, however rich in worldly promise, which would tend to lower the tone or to enfeeble the vigor of moral principle, which would expose you to temptations beyond your strength, or which would injuriously affect your example and influence; and, positively, to select for your pursuits those in which you can get the most good and do the most good.

This last is, it seems to me, the true rule for the choice of a profession. Nor would it restrict the range of your choice; for among the professions which a man of liberal education can honorably embrace, there is not one which may not to some minds meet more surely than any other the conditions of improvement and usefulness,—there is not one in which God may not be truly glorified and man efficiently served.

With respect to your plans for the future, let them be formed deliberately, under a solemn sense of responsibility to God and to your generation, with sober heed to your own powers, capacities, and adaptations. Then, when they are formed, adhere to them, unmoved by transient difficulties or discouragements; make your way, by the help of a good Providence, toward their realization; and remember that, once entered upon, they are changed or abandoned only with a sad, and often a wicked waste of time, of toil, and of ability for duty and means of usefulness, which cannot be wholly diverted into a new career, but must in great part be thrown away. "Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel." "Ponder, then, the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established."

My friends, I have thus given you the counsels of a friend. Receive them with whatever sanction may accrue to them from long observation and experience, and from my earnest desire for your well-being, success, and honor.

Our parting this day has a peculiar sadness, when we think of him, so recently our head,\* who would have dismissed you with his warm and fervent Godspeed. His farewell,—not as we had hoped, but as a Higher Wisdom ordered,—anticipated your departure. You will take with you, I know, his precious and honored memory. A nobler specimen of that noble type of humanity, the

\*President Fulton.

Christian scholar, where will you find? In his devotion to good letters, in his love of every worthy cause of humanity, in his genial friendliness, in his unselfish generosity, in his firmness and fidelity in thankless duty, in his reverent and devout spirit, in his loyalty to the word and will of God, I can only wish that the traits of his character, as they are endeared to your regretful remembrance, may be reproduced in your diligent imitation.

Permit me, in closing, to express, not in mere form, but with a fervor due to the intimate and happy relation in which we have stood together, my sincere and affectionate regard. May the blessing of God go with you on your respective ways in life. As you grow in years, may you grow in the strength and beauty of a true and finished manhood. As you advance toward the earthly ends of your honorable ambition, may you with equal step move on toward favored places in the heavenly hierarchy. May you so pass through the discipline of the things that are seen and temporal, that you shall have your reward and joy in the things that are unseen and eternal. And when all of earth that has not been moulded into character or shaped into forms of usefulness shall go down with you to the grave, may you be awakened from the death-slumber by the voice that shall say to you,—“Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.”

### III.

## THE CHRISTIAN ORDER OF NOBILITY.

(1864.)

“What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter”.—JOHN xiii. 7.

JESUS had just been performing a menial office for his disciples,—had washed their feet as they were about to sit down at the paschal supper,—a service usually performed before supper by a hireling or a slave. Peter objects to being thus served by his Master, and says, in earnest deprecation, “Lord, dost thou wash my feet?” Jesus replies, “What I do thou knowest not now,—thou canst not yet comprehend the significance of this act of mine; but thou wilt know in after time, and wilt deem it thy highest privilege and joy to do likewise.”

This act of Christ was a revolutionary act. It was utterly opposed to pre-existing notions, and was designed to subvert them. There lived not then the man who knew what it meant; there are thousands upon thousands now who live only to embody its meaning. It then seemed servile; it now seems regal. Peter then felt that he could

never stoop so low; the Peters of our time—earnest, aspiring, energetic disciples—feel that they can never rise so high.

In fine, this act of Jesus established a new style and order of nobility,—that of the great servants. Before, greatness had for its aim and token the acquisition or appropriation of wealth, title, power, service, or whatever else might be the foremost object of desire; and the greatest man was he who could most efficiently make others tributary to himself. Since, greatness has had for its aim and token self-privation, self-renunciation, the bestowment of all that one has and is for the good of his brethren; and he is the greatest who has the largest, the most affluent nature to spend and sacrifice for his race, and the most fervent desire to coin his whole being into uses and services.

A moment's reflection will show you how entirely, in this respect, Jesus has made all things new, though the renovation has been slow. Review the series of prolonged and extended wars from the dawn of history almost to our own time, and you can recall as identified with each of them, and thus transmitted to enduring fame, certain names of heroes—manslayers, besiegers of cities, master-destroyers—for whose behoof no less than for whose praise armies have been sacrificed and countries laid waste. Who were the heroes of the Crimean War,—for its magnitude, its darings, its endurings, its brilliant and disastrous epochs, one

of the most eventful wars in all history? Can you recall their names without a painful effort of recollection? Is there one among those names that will be transmitted as illustrious even to the next generation? But that war has its heroine, who has borne off all its laurels,—the founder of the sisterhood of mercy, the tenderly nurtured woman who went forth, in the spirit of the world's Redeemer, to save and to bless, whose name was floated heavenward on the thanks and praises of those ready to perish, and is written for ever and ever in the brightness of the firmament on high.

In the conflict into which we have been forced, though there are those of the fallen and of the surviving who will be held in reverent and grateful memory, will live in history, and be deemed great in coming ages, they have their glory, not as destroyers, but as preservers,—not for what they sought, but for what they sacrificed,—not as soldiers, but as patriots,—not because they were commanders, leaders, office-bearers, but because they made themselves the very chief of servants. Yet even their exalted fame will be rivalled, if not transcended, by that of the ministering angels in camp and battle-field and hospital, whose offices of pure evangelic mercy have wooed back hope for those from whom hope seemed fled forever, have soothed the agony of ebbing life with all of a mother's tenderness, and borne up to heaven on the strong prayer of faith the spirits of the dying.

Can there be a better lesson than our text suggests for those who claim our special interest to-day? You, my friends, go hence, one and all, I trust, with a generous ambition,—with the desire, not to supplant, but to excel,—not to snatch prizes from others, but to win and wear honor in careers on which none can fail who do not deserve to fail. Such is the career opened by our Saviour, and hallowed by his footprints,—that of great servants. It is a field of endeavor in which there is no unfriendly emulation, in which there is room for all, need of all, glory for all, conscious and almost always manifest reward and blessedness on earth, and at the gate of heaven the greeting, “Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

Let me now ask your attention to some of the services due from the educated men of our age and land.

I. As educated men, you are bound to commend liberal tastes and pursuits by the grace and beauty of your own characters. Learning may be made repulsive or attractive, according as it is merely received by the intellect and lodged in the memory, or digested, assimilated, and utilized. In the former case, it is neither culture, knowledge, nor wisdom; and there have been prodigies of learning who have been at the same time prodigies of boorishness, ignorance, and folly, nuisances and

stumbling-blocks in the paths of erudition, fungous excrescences upon the surface of the society which ought to have been adorned by the flowering and nourished by the fruitage of their genius.

Some men take in learning beyond their capacity of stowage, and it lumbers and clogs the mental passages, impedes the processes of the intellect, dulls the discernment, makes the mind heavy and slow, and in its separate items is never at hand when needed, but tumbles from the pen or the lips out of shape, out of place, out of season. Learned men of this order—the Bentleys and Porsons—are the reproach and scandal of scholarship. They are so far out of gearing with the living world, that their attainments can hardly be made to subserve any important office in the progress of knowledge, literature, or science. At the same time their moral development is generally as ungraceful and faulty as their style of intellectual character. Conscious of large attainments, painfully aware that they are unappreciated, and wholly ignorant of the reasons why they forfeit the favor of society, they become morose and surly; they present a porcupine aspect to the surrounding world, and are very Ishmaelites in their relations to their fellow-men.

But learning, made one's own by the vigorous action of the reflective powers, enters into the soul's life-blood; softens and sweetens the manners; refines and exalts the tastes; imparts



weight and dignity to the character; makes the speech pure, rich, and strong; fits the scholar for his lifework by his conversance with the root and essence of things; inspires him with equal prudence and vigor in action; gives aim and end to his endeavor; and places him in kindly and beneficent relations with all around him.

Learning, thus incorporated into the being, is second only to religion as a moral force. It makes its possessor modest and humble; for he owns and feels its limits and its imperfections, and in the desire and effort for larger attainments he regards himself as but a learner and a novice in the ratio of his advancement and proficiency. At the same time, these lofty pursuits can hardly fail so to occupy thought, sentiment, and feeling as to exclude low passions and appetites, sordid avarice and mean ambition, and to make the life sober, chaste, generous, and faithful.

Such scholars you are called to be. Remember that it is not mass of acquisition, but quantity of character, that you need,—not learning, but wisdom, and learning, only that it may be transmuted into wisdom,—dead tongues, that they may give grace and flexibility to your living speech,—history, that it may furnish precedents, examples, warnings, for the time in which your lot is cast,—the philosophy of mind, that you may know yourselves and use your powers,—natural science, that God's creation around you may speak to you in a

known language,—mathematical laws and proportions, that you may read the Divine ordinances in earth and sea and sky and stars.

By such culture you make yourselves among the very chief of servants. You commend good learning by your example. Your higher life is a perpetual protest against the low, grovelling utilitarianism which is the curse and bane of the age. You draw ingenuous youth to the elevation on which you stand. You show that liberal pursuits minister to strength and beauty, to the highest type of manhood, to the power that both uses and overcomes the world.

II. I would next speak of your duty, as educated men, to your country. Some of you have already obeyed the call to her active service, and will be graduated with double honors in arts and in arms. I am reminded, too, and with saddened thought, that not all have returned, that you have laid your costly, precious sacrifice on the altar of patriotism, and that death in the cause so dear and sacred leaves only cherished memories of the gifted, beloved, and tenderly lamented, whose unseen presence deepens the solemnity of your parting hour. So long as the country still needs for her defence those who are her pride and hope, I can only bid a fervent Godspeed to such of you as may serve her in the camp and field. But she has other—I will not say higher, but more enduring—claims on those who should be her leading minds.

There lies before us a work of reconstruction, in which you must bear your part.

Strained to the utmost tension in the stress of need, our body politic may find itself, in victory even, collapsed and nerveless. We shall retire from the conflict a reunited people, I trust, through the good providence of God, but with our industrial, commercial and financial interests disordered and deranged, and not without many of those demoralizing influences which follow in the train even of the most necessary and righteous war. It will be your part, in your several spheres of service, to study the public good; to be vigilant and energetic as citizens; to weigh well the measures which may be helped or hindered by your action; to aid in the elevation of capable, just, God-fearing men to places of trust and power; to give the whole weight of your example in behalf of the frugality which alone can restore what war has wasted, the temperance and soberness which alone can commend our people to the blessing of Heaven, the integrity and loyalty in public and private life which alone can transmit the blessedness of our free institutions to the coming age, and make them the cynosure of liberty to all lands and nations.

In the positions which most or all of you will occupy, you must have wide and enduring influence. Your passiveness and indifference as citizens will paralyze action around you. Your self-

seeking and time-serving will corrupt public opinion in a larger sphere than you mean or know. Your pure and conscientious discharge of every function that may devolve upon you, whether of suffrage, speech, pen, or official station, will multiply and extend itself, not only among those with whom you are intimately associated, but from numerous centres of influence which lie within your respective circles. It is a responsibility which you cannot evade or disown, and which will grow constantly with every stage of your success and advancement. God has given you your nurture under the best government the world has ever seen; thank him for it by such patriotic service and devotion as only the highly privileged can render.

III. Including all other services, and essential to their consistency and their effectual working, is the service demanded of you in the religious consecration of your hearts and lives. On you as scholars religion has peculiar claims.

It might be pardoned to those who are constantly occupied with the most paltry material interests, if there were not in them a sufficiently clear spiritual self-consciousness to commend to their contemplation themes appertaining to the inward life. It would be venial, too, if those unused to reasoning or to research, incapable of following fallacy or sophistry through its windings, were beggled and bewildered by the assumptions and the casuistry of infidelity or naturalism, if a sneer

against the Bible sometimes had with them the force of an argument, if some cavil at an obscure Old Testament narrative seemed to them destructive of the entire historical basis of Christianity.

But you have no such apology. You have been trained in the use of argument,—in the exercise of reason. You know, or can know, how to search into the evidences of the Christian faith; to test the strength of its foundations; to judge of the marks of Divine or human workmanship in its superstructure; to determine for yourself whether it bears tokens of fraud or truth, of delusion or reality, of myth or miracle, of development from man's brain or of revelation from the infinite God, of earthly or of heavenly parentage. You have no right to remain in doubt. If thorough investigation make you unbelievers, I judge you not; but if you become so by reading, hearing, and speculating on the negative side, and ignoring all that may be urged in the affirmative, you do with the most momentous of all subjects what you would not risk your reputation by doing with any other subject, however insignificant in magnitude or ephemeral in interest. But I have no fear for the result of honest inquiry. If Christianity be divine, it cannot fail to vindicate its divinity to every diligent seeker after the truth.

You, too, as educated men, live not on the low sensual plane on which persons destitute of culture must habitually dwell. Yours is, or ought

to be, a life of thought, sentiment, reflection. And can there be any apology for excluding or slighting those noblest themes of thought that belong to the essence, the Author, the destiny of your being,—those highest sentiments that appertain to the realm of spiritual existence,—those loftiest subjects of reflection which embrace the infinite and the eternal? No. Your culture makes these contemplations your duty no less than your privilege. If Christianity is God-born, you, by remaining aliens from its faith and joy, are at once rejecting God's best gifts, and pouring scorn on the Giver.

But while for your own sake I cannot urge these sacred themes too earnestly upon your regard, they equally belong to you as the trained chief servants of your generation. Remember that the excellence of your service depends even more on what you are than on what you do ;—on the mass and momentum of your mental, moral, spiritual life ; on the capacity of influence with which your person, your words, your deeds are charged ; on the power there is in you ; on the virtue that goes forth from you. But Christian piety alone can give the crowning grace to your character, can place you beyond reach of temptation, can attach weight to your precept, dignity and sacredness to your example. You put your soul, your moral nature, such as it is, into whatever you are, and say, and do. If that soul be sensualized, materi-

alized, conversant with earthly things alone, your best-intended endeavors for the good of others are limited by the limitations of your own being. If that soul be enlarged, exalted, hallowed by heavenly communings, by the life of God within, then is there a "power from on high,"—an efficacy literally Divine,—not only in what you say and do expressly for others, but in the mere example of quiet, faithful, persistent duty. You cannot be what God and Christ would have you be, without being among the very chief of servants to your fellow-men.

But because as educated men you will occupy conspicuous places, your irreligion, your infidelity, your neglect of sacred times and ordinances, will be contagious. Sneers and scoffs at Divine truth from your lips will find ready currency. Loose notions as to religion or its records will have from you an authority which minds of inferior culture could never command. You are set, if not for the rise, for the falling of many; and to the full measure of your superior privileges must you be responsible for the souls that will often owe to you their noblest or their basest impulses, their initial starting and their vigorous progress on the path to God, or on the way of death.

"For their sakes," said Jesus, "I sanctify myself." "For their sakes,"—for the sake of the many, the constantly widening circle, to whom you may be the source of the holiest influences,—

sanctify yourselves, that in the resurrection-life there may be those who will say to you, "Ye helped us hither," and who will be as jewels in the crown of your eternal rejoicing.

My friends, receive these counsels as the heart-offering of one who speaks to you lovingly and hopefully,—of one, too, whose years have their authority,—who has followed with the warmest sympathy successive circles of youth that have been under his charge into the scenes of their maturer cares and trusts, and who speaks of what he knows, testifies of what he has seen, in the solemn emphasis with which he commends Christian faith and piety as essential to the loyal, faithful, efficient service of man, and of God in and through man.

I feel a peculiar nearness of intimacy with you. You and I commenced our college life together; and you can hardly know how solicitously I have watched the development and growth of character in those who here first came under my instruction, and compared each stage of the fulfillment with the hope and promise that you severally gave at the outset.

I cannot but recall, as our parting approaches, him under whose presidency you entered on your academic career.\* It was the joy of his life and the beauty of his character, to be among the very chief of servants. No one illustrated more fully and richly than he the beneficent influence, the ex-

\* President Fulton.



tended and cumulative power for good, at the command of the Christian scholar. You will carry hence with you precious memories of his genial spirit, his meek wisdom, his wealth of intellect, his persistent firmness in the right. Let us be thankful that the dead live for our example, and speak for our counsel, though we see them no more till we meet them in heaven.

My friends, take with you my congratulations on all the honor that you have worthily won, on all the prophecy of worth and honor that you bear with you from these walls to the world-wide university in which your training is now to be pursued; and my most affectionate wishes for your well-being and well-doing. May God bless you and keep you. May he make you his servants for great and enduring good in and far beyond your day and generation. May he write your names together in his book of life eternal; and while we shall never all again renew our Sabbath worship in the same earthly sanctuary, may none be wanting in our united praise and worship in the temple not made with hands.

#### IV.

### APPROVAL AND CHOICE.

(1865).

"And approvest the things that are excellent."—ROMANS ii. 18.

"Choose you this day whom ye will serve."—JOSHUA xxiv. 15.

ACCORDING to a Chinese legend, the founders of the three established religions of the Celestial Empire, talking together in heaven of the restricted progress and influence of their doctrines, agreed to revisit the earth, and see if they could not find some one who could be an efficient reformer and propagandist. The three sages, after searching in vain through town and country for the right person, came at length to a desert place, where they saw an old man sitting by a fountain. On their entering into discourse with him, they found him better versed than themselves in the precepts which they had promulgated when on the earth, and he rebuked them for having lived far below their own standard. But when they proposed to the old man the office of an active promoter of virtue and piety, he replied: "It is only the upper part of me that is of flesh and blood; the lower part is of stone, I can talk about virtue, but cannot practise it. I approve, I admire, but can do nothing." In this man the sages recognized

the type of his race, and in despair of reforming such a world returned to heaven.

There is a profound truth in this legend. It indicates at once the glory and the infirmity of human nature. Man approves the right, but is feeble and impotent in actualizing it. But Jesus Christ does for it what the Chinese philosophers could not do. He vivifies the stone; as it softens into flesh, he pours into it his own life-blood; and the active powers thus energized by him do what they approve, become what they admire.

My friends of the graduating Class, as I address you collectively for the last time, I want to drop into your hearts some fructifying word; and I have thought that I could select no topic more appropriate to your present position than APPROVAL AND CHOICE, considered in their relations to character. I want to discriminate carefully between them; for they are often confounded, though heaven-wide apart, and it is mainly because we confound them that our self-esteem is so apt to transcend the favor in which we are held by God and man. We judge ourselves by what we approve; they judge us by what we choose. The self-complacency of youth is sustained by an honest, unsophisticated approval of all that is excellent; the follies, failures, and sins of maturer years grow from the choice of what the judgment cannot approve.

You are at this moment unanimous as to your

moral judgments. Were I to rehearse to you all the precepts of our Saviour's Sermon on the Mount, there is not one of them to which you would not, every one of you, give cordial and unqualified assent. You hold in the highest esteem all the traits of Christian excellence,—all the strength and beauty of holiness embodied in the life of Jesus Christ upon the earth. Of his character in its entirety you would say with one voice, "All this I ought to be and to do." And may not some of you trust to this pure moral taste as a sufficient safeguard against evil? You, perhaps, say to yourselves, "The weak indulgences to which so many yield I heartily despise, and it is impossible that I should ever become their victim." Yet of the lost souls still on earth, and of those that have passed on to their account,—many of them as truly suicides as if they had deliberately taken their own lives with their own hands,—there are a very large proportion who have never ceased to approve what is excellent, whose æsthetic natures have recoiled with loathing from their own vices, who have abhorred nothing so heartily as they have abhorred themselves.

I would have you aware that approval is but a feeble emotion; that a true and keen æsthetic sense as to matters of right and obligation, while it may enhance the beauty, can add nothing to the strength of character, and is always liable to be overborne by the appetites, the desires, the loves, the passions. These are the motive powers. They

prompt the choice, govern the will, and give tone to the life. They determine the man's place, whether among nobler or baser spirits,—among those that are elect of God and honored of their brethren, or among those whose names are blotted from the book of life eternal. We are, not what we approve, but what we choose. Let us see then what is involved in choice.

In the first place, the definite choice—none the less real when unconfessed—of certain primary objects of desire or pursuit is the common habit, nay, the necessity of the developed and matured mind. The separate volitions of each passing day are not desultory, as they seem, but are in part determined, in part essentially modified, by the life-choice. This you are now only beginning to verify; you will verify it with ever-increasing distinctness in your consciousness and experience. You have hitherto been in many respects dependent on the dictation of others; but so far as that dictation has been wise, its intent has been to prepare you to make a worthy choice for yourselves. Your intellectual training—thus far on substantially the same curriculum—has been designed to furnish you materials for your judgment and motives for your choice, as to the aims with which you will start on your respective life-paths. Our purpose has been to lead you to an eminence from which you can take an intelligent survey of the several routes into which the way that you have

pursued together now divides. At the same time, the religious instruction that you have received—seconded by the discipline of Providence, which has repeatedly opened the unseen world to your near vision, as the veil has been lifted for one after another of your classmates to pass within—has been directed with a view to the all-embracing, all-pervading, all-controlling choice, which we would have you make, not for time, but for eternity,—the choice of Jesus Christ as your Teacher, Exemplar, Guide, and Saviour. The evidences of his Divine sonship, mission, and authority have been presented to you in the class-room, not as a mere scholastic exercise, but with the earnest desire that you should hear and obey the voice which once spake on earth and ever speaks from heaven. Here too, and in your other places of worship, the unceasing endeavor of those who have spoken to you in the Lord's name has been to elicit your response to the call of God, "My son, give me thy heart." As you select your respective aims,—above all, as you make the great life-choice of the service of God, or that of earthly gain, fame, or influence, your separate volitions will more and more group themselves as accessory around the main object of your desire and endeavor,—a large and constantly increasing proportion of them having its direct furtherance in view, while even in the avocations—the side pursuits—of society, recreation, or repose, this object will not be lost

from sight, but will be incidentally promoted and advanced.

I would next ask you to observe, that, in order to an effective, persistent choice, there must be strong feeling, vivid emotion, enthusiasm. This is essential to your successful choice of a profession or calling. I would not have you embark on your life-work from cold calculation, not even from the deliberate estimate of your capacities and adaptations. You will never prosper unless you love your work. Heart and soul, no less than mind and strength, must be given to it. Else, whatever your powers, you will never rise above the lowest ranks and the meanest drudgery of your profession. If enthusiasm be not genius, it supplies the place and fulfils the office of genius. Some of the greatest men in their respective vocations have given little early promise; but because they loved their work, it soon glowed under their hands,—their dulness became brilliancy, their awkwardness skill, their stammering eloquence.

But if this be the law of all the higher walks of earthly business and ambition, still more is it the law of the religious life. No mere prudential virtue, no close weighing of consequences, no dread of perdition, makes one a saint. There must be a heart-choice of things that are excellent, for their own sake, their intrinsic beauty and loveliness. A preference warm and ardent, like that which sustained holy men of old in stripes and ignominy, at

the stake and on the cross, alone can make and keep us loyal to duty under the no less severe conflicts that we must wage with appetite and passion, evil example and corrupt influence. The martyr-spirit,—the love and pursuit of the right at all hazards,—is as essential to the Christian of the nineteenth century as it was to the Christian of the first; and the dread of ridicule, or of arduous effort, or of transient inconvenience, or of a solitary position at the bidding of conscience, requires to overcome it no less vigor of will and fervor of spirit than did the dread of death when death might be the penalty for faith.

I would next ask you to observe, that in every vigorous and persistent choice the personal element bears a large part. Affection or reverence feeds the enthusiasm that inspires generous endeavor, and sustains the patience which can wait for the slow success or the distant prize. How almost certain of utter failure is the misanthrope, though of splendid abilities! On the other hand, the greater the cloud of loved, sympathizing, approving witnesses, the more earnest is the contest, the more sure and ample the reward. As you with more or less fixedness of purpose are looking forward to your respective careers, there is not one of you who does not feel as if he were making his choice for parents, kindred, and friends, no less than for himself; while not a few of you may have been determined in the election of a calling by



fervent admiration of some illustrious man whose glowing footprints make that seem of all careers the brightest and the happiest. And would to heaven you might look above the amphitheatre of friendly forms and faces to the all-seeing eye of Him who claims your supreme reverence, choose your life-work as at His bidding, select your life-path as by the ordering of His providence, and enter on the career in which you are conscious that you can best serve Him by serving your fellow-men!

Here will you pardon me a digression? I am grieved to find that from year to year diminished numbers of the graduating classes at this and our other New England colleges make choice of the Christian ministry. I would have none enter upon it who are not self-consecrated to God by sincere piety, and who do not in heart, no less than in theory, regard the service of their race as the prime end of their earthly being. But of those thus fitted, and endowed with powers that would insure their distinguished success and usefulness, an unduly large proportion turn aside to other, and, I am well convinced, less satisfying walks of duty. I am aware of the discouragements in this profession,—its frail tenure of office, its inadequate compensation, the paucity of its high prizes, and the paltriness of even these as compared with the opportunities for wealth and fame held forth on other careers. But with all these drawbacks, I believe

that there is no life so rich in its daily revenue of beneficent influence, in its kindly relations and sympathies, in its indestructible friendships, in its hallowed memories, in its forecast lights from the reunions and the blessed society of the unseen world, as that of the New England parish minister. Had I a thousand lives to repeat, generation after generation, upon the earth, I can say, with whatever weight the experience of more than a quarter of a century can give to my words, that I would, without a moment's hesitation, devote the prime, the best days of every one of these lives to this work.

To return : the influence of the affections on every great choice in life is emphatically verified in the one choice which includes all others,—that of Christian obedience and piety. A philosophy, even of the unseen, of the higher principles of ethics, of the most recondite spiritual truths, might command our approval, gratify our taste, occupy our studious hours ; but it could not constrain the choice, lay its clinching grasp upon the will, and insure that close-clinging loyalty and love which would make us willing for its sake to endure sacrifice and suffering. Abstract truths do not enlist enthusiasts, self-devoted propagandists, martyrs. Stephen would never have died for an impersonal creed ; but when he saw heaven opened, “and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,” it was sweet to die for him. Therefore is it that

religion proffers its claims on our allegiance, through our affections. Its exhortation is not, "Choose *what* law ye will obey," but "Choose *whom* ye will serve." The love of God, the compassion of Christ, the manifestation on the cross of such tenderness of pity and such intensity of self-sacrifice as have no parallel in the world's history,—these are the renovating agencies through which men are brought from the death of sin into the new and heavenly life. The Gospel has done nothing for us when it has our mere recognition of its divinity; its finished work is personal sentiment,—love, veneration, loyalty. It is to the intimacy of this personal feeling that Christian piety owes its strength, its tenderness, its power to do and to endure, its persistency, its growth. The religious sentiment which springs not from the love of God and of Christ, but which consists in the mere approval of the things that are excellent, in a cold assent to the truths of Christianity, the wisdom of its precepts, and the faultlessness of its Founder's example, may suffice for the decencies of life in the absence of severe temptation and sorrow; but when the rains descend, and the floods come, and the winds blow, the only rock of safety and peace is the living, loving Christ. Only the soul that rests on him can endure and overcome in the fiery trials of principle, in the crucial tests of character, which in one form or another enter into almost every experience. Only the soul that rests on him can meet the ap-

proach of death in fearless triumph, assured that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

My friends, as you enter on yet untried life-paths ; as you become more than ever before your own keepers and guides ; as the great questions of your earthly future claim your speedy answer ; as new classes of temptations, those connected with the various lures of worldly gain and ambition, assail you,—let me beg you not to rest contented with the approval of the things that are excellent, but “ choose you this day whom ye will serve.” This is for you a season of as much solemnity as gladness. It is one of those marked epochs of which there are but few in the longest life. You stand at the parting of the ways ; and from the way on which you now enter you may never have the will or the power to recede. Choose then, first of all, the way on which you will have increasing joy with every stage of your progress. CHOOSE ; for as you choose, you are. A perfect Christian, indeed, you cannot become suddenly, nor, perhaps, ever in this world. But you can at any moment, you can at this moment, make the vow of allegiance to your soul’s Sovereign. You can say, with the intensity of a resolute will, “ Saviour, I am thine, forever thine.” You can so resolve that the unfading record shall be entered in heaven,—“ Henceforth God’s will shall be mine, His law mine, His love my endeavor and my joy.” This resolve,

this vow, fervently breathed, with the determination that it shall never be recalled, makes you a Christian, seals your adoption into your Divine Master's family, sends you forth into life no longer your own, but His,—not orphaned and lone because you are no more “under tutors and governors,” but absolved from human dependence for that service of Him which is the only perfect freedom.

You need to have made this primal choice, that you may not err in the secondary yet momentous matters in which you must soon make your choice for life. We are wont to use with reference to our various professions and pursuits a profoundly religious word; would to Heaven that its religious significance were as profoundly felt! We speak of one's *calling* or *vocation*. A calling,—who calls? Rightfully, only He whose word should be our supreme law. The choice of a mode of life should always be obedience to the calling of God,—not, indeed, as the Hebrew prophets were called from the plough or the herd, by an audible voice from heaven, but often with no less distinctness and certainty, if we will only study God's will in our capacities and opportunities, in the field of duty around us, and in the demand for reapers which comes up from one or another portion of that field. God has his work for each of you. If you, my friend, in sincere faith and an obedient spirit ask, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” I know

that you will be guided to the very pursuit, in which you can do the most good, secure the greatest amount of happiness that can be yours in this world, and best prepare yourself for nobler service when, through the ministry of death, you shall have another calling to a higher sphere of duty.

As you go hence, I trust that you will bear with you as pleasant memories as you leave. It is the misfortune of your teachers to form the most cordial friendships with successive classes, and then only to witness in the distance or to learn from the testimony of others the development of the rich promise manifested within these walls, and of the noble, generous traits of character which had made our college intercourse happy. Your connection with me has been on my side so pleasant, that I am sure I cannot err in addressing you as my personal friends; and it is not in the mere formality of a parting sermon, but with a warmth of feeling cherished by as kind mutual relations as can ever have subsisted between teacher and pupils, that I bid you a fervent Godspeed. May the guiding spirit of our Father go with you on your several ways. May you grow in favor with God and man, as you grow in years. May you, while it is yet day, work faithfully for your country and your race; and at nightfall, when the Great Taskmaster shall call his laborers home to give them their hire, may you have your rich reward in the resurrection of the just.

## V.

### MANHOOD.

(1867).

"Show thyself a man."—1 **KINGS** ii. 2.

THE prime object of a liberal education is not the imparting of certain kinds or degrees of knowledge, but the development of an advanced type of manliness,—the culture of those attributes by which a man may take and keep the high place assigned to him by his Creator, as lord of this lower world, and the destined heir of a far nobler inheritance hereafter. These attributes are both of mind and of heart. It is chiefly with the former that we have been concerned in our course of academic instruction. You are already aware, and will become still more so, that you have learned but little here. What I trust you have attained is the capacity of learning, the skill to find what you need or wish to know, and the power of analyzing, combining, generalizing, assimilating, and re-creating—in forms that bear the signature of your own minds—whatever you do know or shall know. It is not in any definite amount of knowledge, but in the ability to acquire and use

knowledge, that a liberal education consists. This ability is the token and measure of a manly intellect, of mastership over resources, of lordship in the realm of mind. Of this I shall not now speak at length, but will content myself with urging you to preserve and mature your intellectual manhood, by giving the first place to the athletic exercise of the faculties, and the second, though always an essential place, to the accumulation of materials for their future use; and with begging you to avoid equally a contented acquiescence in your present attainments, and the crowding of the memory beyond the capacity of orderly stowage.

My prime object, as in accordance with the sacredness of the place and occasion, is to present some of the characteristics and the claims of that moral and spiritual manhood, which, while it breaks up the delicate lines and indents the rounded proportions that mark a lower type of beauty, yet combines, with its strength, beauty of a far higher order in the knotted sinews of strenuous purpose, in the scars—not wound-marks, but glory-marks—of successful conflict with evil, in the furrows ploughed by the continuous, anxious endeavor to comprehend the true, to embody the right, and to realize the good.

In the first place, the true man regards as a sacred trust his own individuality; by which I mean those traits wherein God intended that he should differ from those around him, as he does in



form and feature,—those traits which make him, to use a grammatical distinction, a proper and not a common noun,—an individual, and not a member of such or such classes or bodies of men. Our age has won the distinction of breaking down the barriers that used to divide nation from nation, and inaugurating the intercourse by steam and telegraph, which tends to fuse the civilized world into one vast and almost homogenous nationality. It is entitled to the less enviable distinction of doing more than all preceding ages toward breaking down the barriers between man and man, the fences of individual character, the sacredness of private opinion, judgment, and habit. The press and the caucus tyrannize over one's life as a citizen, and confine his political action within limits as narrow, though not always as straight, as those which bound a railway track; while a vote or act not pre-arranged by his party, even though the dictate of honesty, brands him with very much the same kind of stigma that used to attach to dishonesty. In social life, fashion usurps a similar control; and her dicta, emanating no one knows whence, yet with a sovereignty which no one dares to resist, are suffered to override all considerations of health, comfort, propriety, integrity, and religion; while the dissenter, though his dissent be enforced by necessity, or by conscience, which ought to be the most cogent of necessities, is treated as a person excommunicate. As to moral habits, the customs

of every community and of every circle seem a constraining law within its own precincts; and fewer than ever before have the courage and energy to mark out and pursue their own higher path.

It is refreshing to read the memoirs of such men as flourished in New England a century, or even half a century, ago. They bear about the same relation to such biographies as men, I fear, are preparing for themselves now, that a river bears to a canal,—the canal having only the tow-path, locks, and ports of lading, to mark its course; the river winding, at its own sweet will, between verdant banks, now through forest, now through meadow, now broader, now narrower, then doubling upon itself, and presenting at every turn new types and groupings of scenery. By this merging of individualities, none can deny that life, both acted and written, is losing all of its picturesque elements.

But what concerns us here is the moral sacrifice occasioned by this lack of independence. By every surrender of the judgment to pressure or dictation from without, violence is done to the moral nature; a wrench is given to conscience; there is a deterioration of principle. He who compromises his integrity in political action, or in some matter of social custom, is not, as to his own private affairs, the man that he else would be. In matters of vital moment to his own soul, he is the more ready

to sacrifice principle to expediency, to tamper with the right, to postpone decision and action where they are needed and due, to yield where he should control and guide. He has parted with a portion of his manhood, and he cannot resume it at will.

I am inclined to believe, that this external pressure constitutes the greatest moral peril of young men. They certainly are liable to some besetting sins to which they can have no internal temptation. For instance, no inward impulse ever made a well-nurtured youth a blasphemer. Such a one, in becoming profane in speech, must of necessity violate innate sentiments, deepened by all the influence of his earliest years and associations, especially by all that was sacred in a mother's purity and love. But am I wrong in saying that in some circles of young men profaneness is the current dialect,—the shibboleth without which one would seem an intruder and a spy? This is not because any one of them doubts the wickedness and vileness of the habit; but because no one of them has the manliness to consult his own conscience, and abide by it,—because every new member of the circle has suffered the wall with which God has fenced in his soul from all other souls to be broken down, and its stones, laid by no human hand, to be trampled in the mire.

Intemperance often has a yet prior cause in transmitted and hereditary appetite. But where this cause is lacking, the first steps in the way to

ruin are almost always to be traced to a deficient manliness, to the inability to say No, to the submission of the individual soul in that which it condemns to the imperative tyranny of a custom which frowns on abstinence, and not infrequently on moderation. I could point out to you those no longer young, who, for years urged by conscience to resist the encroachments of this habit, and lacking only the manliness to do as they knew they ought, have now outlived the power of resistance, and, by gradations which they are the only persons not to mark, are lapsing from what they call generous living into an habitual sottishness, that must overwhelm their latter years in imbecility and dishonor.

In every department of moral duty, the strongest opposition that virtue encounters is from the fear, or shame, or self-abasement, or whatever it is, which makes one false to conscience and to God, rather than to custom and the will of man,—careless of his individual convictions, and eager only to know how others think and feel. It never was so true as now, that

“Broad is the road that leads to death,  
And thousands walk together there;”

and, did they not “walk together,” there would be more hope of reclaiming them. Were the errors of each self-born and self-nurtured, there would be at least room for the working of that

gospel which addresses its appeals, and extends its offices, to the individual soul; but now, more than ever before, the individual has not an independent existence, an active conscience of his own, and he can therefore be reached only through the mass, influenced only through the leaven which works in those around him, converted only when they are ready to change their position with him. The prodigal, in our Lord's parable, did not come to himself in the midst of his companions; but only when they had stripped him of his substance, and left him alone, so that his individuality was forced back upon him. He had gone from himself through their influence; he came to himself when that influence was withdrawn.

We need, secondly, to defend our manhood, not only against encroachment from without, but equally against our own supineness and indolence. The supremacy of the will over mere inclination, and over the fitful activity of the emotional nature, is an essential element of manliness. There are times when our life-work seems spontaneous, and therefore easy. There are other times, (and they are not infrequent), when, with a clear perception of duty, we are conscious of coldness, sluggishness, and reluctance as to its performance,—of the spirit which cries, To-morrow, when conscience says, To-day and Now. While our life-work always burns and urges, we are often tempted to let its due season go by, because our feelings are not

level with its demands; to follow instinct rather than duty; to wait for the afflatus, instead of inviting and stirring it by earnest effort.

It is a delicious breathing of spiritual dilettantism, but a strain utterly unworthy of our manhood,—

“Sighing, I cry, Sweet Spirit, come!  
Celestial breeze, no longer stay;  
But swell my sails, and speed my way.”

The discharge of duty against inclination, the studying of its times rather than of our times, is the part of true manliness. Its times Providence marks; our times may often fail to overtake them, and, when we are in a mood which befits them, it may be too late for them. There is no need, in order that we may do our work, that the entire working apparatus of the soul be in perfect trim. We may pray for the celestial breeze; but we need not wait for it, so long as ours is the sinewy oar-arm. Nay, strenuous, manly effort in what we know God would have us do, is our most efficient prayer for the renewed breathing of the Divine Spirit. In this sense, *laborare est orare*,—to labor is to pray. If we ply the oar with true aim and resolute purpose, it will not be long before the heavenly breeze will spring up, and the flapping sails be filled, and the weary oar-arm be superseded by a more potent impulse. Then, too, the breeze will fan the slumbering furnace-flame;

the heart will glow and burn; the rapt spirit will be borne on as by wheels of fire; and the very task begun coldly and reluctantly, yet at the prompting of a loyal conscience, will be finished with alacrity and rejoicing. Thus the hand-work becomes heart-work; and the will, at first forced into action, is overborne and outspeeded by every power and affection that can be brought into gearing with the machinery of duty.

Yet more: true manhood needs also to defend itself against the tyranny of one's pursuit or profession. Man is not an isolated being. He lives not, or ought not to live, for himself. He is not merely an individual existence, but a child of God, to whom he owes fealty, adoration, love,—a member of society, to which he owes every office that he can render of helpfulness and charity. His relations to God and to his fellows are an inseparable part of his selfhood. He is no true man, who does not consecrate all that he has and is to his Father and to his brethren. In these sacred relations, none owe so much to God and man as those whom a superior education has fitted for what are called the liberal pursuits and professions,—which are neither liberal nor liberalizing, apart from the devout and loving spirit which prompts, guides and hallows them.

The self-centred and self-seeking scholar has no specific distinction from the self-centred and self-seeking ignoramus. His learning is not wis-

dom. It lies in his memory, but is not incorporated into his selfhood. What though he know the tongues of men, and of angels too? If he have not charity,—love,—love to God and man,—they profit him nothing. The study of language is precious, as a key to great spiritual truths which God's providence has imbedded in speech, for reverent research to disinter, and thus to learn more of him; as an avenue, too, by which humane sympathies may become conversant with various phases of life and thought, the contemplation of which may make the tongue or pen more fluent and eloquent for instruction and persuasion. Of what avail, again, is physical science, apart from the relations, divine and human, in which it may serve a kindly ministry? One may know the secrets of nature, animate and inanimate; the courses of the stars; the infinitesimal mysteries which the microscope reveals; the names of plants, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall; the intimate structure of the great globe, and its every fabric and tissue: and yet his mind will shrivel while he thinks it grows, and he will become less and less of a man while he imagines that he is achieving greatness, unless he adores while he learns,—enters into ever-closer apprehension of Him whose "incorruptible spirit is in all things," and into an ever-dearer love of all the organized, sentient, intelligent forms of being into which the Creator has breathed life, beauty, joy, from his own fulness.



Similar considerations apply to the learned professions, so called. The manipulation of the human body in its phases of disease and suffering is in itself a mere mechanical avocation, not one whit more dignified, more characteristic of a lofty manhood, than the cleansing and repairing of a watch or a music-box. But it is a glorious function, worthy of perfected manhood, to tend, heal, and cure men's maladies and infirmities, when compassion guides the hand; when the humane purpose hallows the physician's art or the surgeon's skill; when he accepts his calling as a charge from the beneficent Father to his children in distress.

The merely technical lawyer, who seeks his revenue from the strifes, misfortunes, or follies of his neighbors, dwindles in spirit, till he becomes the smallest, meanest being that claims to be called a man. But he who conscientiously defends the right, guards the interests of the accused as a sacred trust, maintains the supremacy of law as man's least imperfect transcript of the Divine order, spurns the temptation to fraud and chicanery, puts on integrity as a robe, and righteousness as a diadem,—he achieves for himself an excelling manhood, and wins a good degree in the hierarchy of upright souls.

The preacher who preaches himself, and not Christ; who aims at reputation, not evangelism; who is not God's oracle, but the mouthpiece of

public opinion; who makes truce with popular sin and inveterate wrong; who seeks the fleece, indeed, and "the shearer's feast," but to whom .

"The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed," —

he not only ignores the priestly office which he seems to exercise, but abdicates the manhood in which alone he should dare to minister at the altar. But he does the work and holds the office of a true man, who receives his message lovingly from the Lord of men and angels,—who in aim and purpose is a fellow-worker with the Saviour in restoring the lost, consoling the grief-stricken, diffusing peace on earth, and maturing human spirits for the society of the redeemed.

I have spoken of the need of fencing our manhood against dictation or example from without, against our own sloth or waywardness, against the unmanning influence of even the most liberal professions. Let me add, in closing, that true manhood, while it excludes and scorns all other limitations, owns the metes and bounds to its liberty established by the Author of our being. There is a world of meaning in what was, in my infancy, the first reading-lesson in the spelling-book which then held exclusive place in our New-England schools,—“No man can put off the law of God.” The moral law has no exceptions, and no exemptions. Our only safe liberty is within its limits; our only safe activity is in the directions in

which it points. Our power, in the full vigor of manhood, may be great and wide and lasting; our influence may move crowds; our opinion may give law to many feebler spirits; our conduct may be the rule and pattern for a multitude: but retribution is as inevitable as the reflux of the ebbing tide. Of the quality of our actions must be our destiny. As we sow, we must reap,—if the wind, the whirlwind; if wayward guilt, shame and misery; if the bold vices of perverted manhood, the heavier condemnation of the chief of sinners.

This inevitable law needs to be borne in mind; for there are not a few in whom are the germs of genuine manhood, who deem it the part of manliness to scorn the dictates of scrupulous morality, to take the law into their own hands, and to defy the counsels of religion, as if her voice were only for the feebler members of society, or for those stricken with grief or age. Never has there been a prolonged career of this description, on whose declining path retributive justice has not written, in appalling characters, its sentence of condemnation. Never has there been such a career, which has not shown that its defiance was aimed at Omnipotence,—that its boasted freedom was but a suicidal rush against barriers of adamantine strength, erected by the Almighty between guilt and all happiness, all blessedness.

True manliness recognizes things as they are, and must of necessity be. It lives in God's uni-

verse as his, and under his law as his. It consecrates its entire energy to Him from whom it came, and to whom it must be ever amenable. If there be a God, nothing is so manly as to own his presence and providence, and to dare—whatever hinderances there may be—to do his will, and obey his commandments. If there be a Saviour, who became mortal that he might endow us with immortality, nothing is so manly as to confess him openly, to keep his whole charge, and to fulfill every behest of that love of his which was stronger than death. If there be a life beyond the grave, and if the complexion of that life be determined by our character and conduct here, nothing is so manly as to mark with solemn deliberation whither the several life-paths lead, and to enter on no path on which we are not willing that death should find us, and eternity lead us on.

My friends of the graduating Class, I trust that these counsels will not seem inappropriate, as you pass from restraint and tutelage, to be henceforward, under God, your own masters. I can offer for you no better wish, no more hearty prayer, than that you show yourselves men. This the University claims of you, if her discipline have been of any worth. This your age and your country need of you, and of all who have enjoyed like culture. This your several professions will demand of you, if you would honor them, and be honored in them. This God requires of you,—

that you hallow to his praise, and exercise in his service, the manhood in which you bear his image; for "the Father seeketh such to worship him."

I wish that I could charge my words with the fervent benediction for you which is in my heart. May God Almighty lead you in every way of his commandments, defend you from evil, make you his ministers of blessing in the several spheres of duty to which his providence shall call you! May Jesus Christ—the only sure corner-stone of your life-edifice for time and for eternity—inspire you with his strength, and breathe into your souls his peace! May you so own him on earth, that he shall own you at the solemn judgment-seat! May you so follow him here, that you shall be his followers in heaven and for ever!

## VI.

### THE SOVEREIGNTY OF LAW.

(1869.)

"I will keep thy law continually, and I will walk at liberty."  
—PSALM cxix. 44, 45.

FRICTION seems, at first thought, the prime hinderance to the working of all mechanical forces. On the other hand, it is the condition, the means, the constant auxiliary, of their efficiency. It gives them the hold without which they are powerless, the direction without which they are aimless. Mathematically, it is but a modifying element in their respective formulas; but without it those formulas would have been mere abstractions of the brain, not representatives of physical facts or possibilities. Man may overcome the steepest acclivities on land; he may steer his steamer in the very teeth of the hurricane; in the air, he can sail only with the wind, because he has no holding ground.

What friction is in mechanics, law is in the universe of mind. It seems to constrain freedom, while, in fact, it is the essential condition of free-

dom. Without it, there could be no aim, no direction, no fruitful industry, no successful enterprise. Without it, forethought would have no data; effort, no purchase. Man would be the puppet of unforeseen circumstance, whirled about in the eddies of incalculable chance. Under the reign of law, we can choose with the hope of realizing, aim with the prospect of attaining, work with the prophecy of success. Thus law and liberty are cor-relatives, as our text makes them, law alone rendering liberty possible.

But are there no exemptions? May not law be racked, and stretched, and tampered with, by a man of resolute will, so that he may be free, not under law, but over it, in spite of it,—so that he may neglect or violate it, yet evade the normal consequences of such neglect or violation? So many think; but it is an opinion which experience almost inevitably reverses. Happy they whose experience has not been experiment!

In Webster's Spelling Book, long the classic of American infancy, the first lesson in "easy reading" was, "No man can put off the law of God." One who knew the old lexicographer, as I did, could hardly help thinking that he was inspired by a higher wisdom than his own; for that maxim, so profoundly impressed upon the memory of the children whose culture he made his care, is the most momentous lesson that man can learn. It is learned, no doubt, by all, sooner or later,—by

many, however, not in this world,—by many, only through a sad and fatal series of experiments, as fruitless as would be the attempt to bind the wind, or to stop the stars.

I have thought that I could select no more fit theme than the supremacy of law, for those who are just emerging from a state of pupilage into one of larger liberty. Let us consider some of the ways in which young men often expect and attempt to evade or override law.

In the realm of intellect there are not a few who expect success without strenuous endeavor, achievement without adequate labor, reputation without patient and persevering toil, the high prizes of professional or literary eminence without the self-denial and self-discipline which befit those who strive for the mastery. The really ambitious student sometimes accustoms himself to spasmodic effort, with long intervals of quiescence, and supposes that by intense mental action for short periods he can supply the lack of continuous exertion. I have lived long enough to know from observation, even did I not believe in law, that there are no exemptions on the arena of honorable competition,—that diligence is the invariable condition of permanent success and valuable attainment. Industry can almost create its own instruments. It can quicken the slow, sharpen the dull, and energize the feeble intellect, so that he



who starts on the race of life with all the odds against him, can distance those who have everything but persevering industry in their favor. I might, were it fitting, cite well-known names of men regarded as foremost in their respective departments, who were commiserated at the outset for their blindness and fatuity in attempting high intellectual culture, so slender an estimate was placed on their capacity; but who became pre-eminently men of *talents*, in the sense suggested by our Lord's parable, having had but one talent given them, and having multiplied it tenfold by its faithful use. One I knew, who held with credit the highest offices in the national cabinet and judiciary, who in his youth was at once the laughing-stock of his fellow-students for the utter hebetude of his intellect, and their wonder for his unprecedented closeness of application and abstinence from amusement and relaxation. Not one of them approached the eminence which he fairly earned.

There can be no doubt that spasmodic, fitful, intermittent effort may accomplish a great deal in a little time. So may a horse, by hard driving, be made to carry twice his normal load, or to travel at twice his normal speed; but the utmost aggregate of such achievements, in a month or a week, is less than that of his regular, systematic labor would be, while his capacity of extraordinary labor early declines, and with it, his power of ordi-

nary, normal work. He is prematurely worn out and worthless. The men who prefer overwork, and work out of season, to sustained and regular industry, for a while keep abreast, or even in advance, of those whom they deem mere plodders; but their fits of industry gradually become less frequent and less productive. At thirty, they can accomplish much less than at twenty. They pass the zenith of their fame at an age when their more diligent coevals are hardly midway on their ascending path; and then they lose reputation faster than they had gained it, and linger on in inanity, in a sort of living death, serving no valuable purpose, except to demonstrate the sovereignty of the divine law which measures the laborer's hire by his toil.

Let it not be imagined that even genius creates exceptions to this law. It has furnished the most impressive instances of its inevitable operation. Take the case of Byron. No man ever lived in whom the poetic flame burned brighter than in him. But with poems and parts of poems that will last while the language endures, and will win him imperishable fame, he has left a much larger mass of the merest doggerel, silly when not worse; and his works, taken collectively, present a melancholy spectacle of wasted powers, of premature senility, of a life which was little else than a lengthened suicide. Contrast such a career as his with that of Milton, whose genius globes itself entire in

every sonnet and fugitive stanza, whose labors for civil and religious freedom might have seemed work and glory enough for the foremost man of his age, and whose mere pastime it was,—the sands of every hour utilized as they ran,—that found its recreation and its joy by

“Siloa’s brook that flowed  
Fast by the oracle of God.”

Genius is not the capacity of creating without toil, but that of working greatly and gloriously. There are preserved, in Michael Angelo’s house in Florence, juvenile sketches of his which any youth might have drawn, indicating the slow and tentative development of that Titanic power, whose vastness and grandeur were the miracle of his time. In the Ambrosian Library, at Milan, are large collections of drawings, in every stage of finish, and of every grade of merit, by Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and other world-famous painters, demonstrating that they learned to give shape to their ideals by arduous and painful toil, and awakening the doubt whether even they would have left monuments of their genius more precious than the wealth of empires, had they trusted to inspiration alone,—had not the capacity of patient labor come to them with “the vision and the faculty divine.” I am constantly impressed by the life-records and the memorials of the men whose works are a possession for all time and for their

race, with the conviction that they had learned, as the price of their fame,

“To scorn delights and live laborious days.”

Believe, my friends, that by the immutable law of God you may become all that it is in your hearts to be, if you will but pay this price. Your wills have hitherto been in part constrained, I trust by a not unwise discretion, which has sought to give you, often, “not what you wish, but what you want.” Yet this constraint—greatly relaxed under our present elective system—has had its purpose and bearing in preparing you for the judicious exercise of liberty. A *liberal* education has for its end, as its name implies, freedom of the entire realm of intellect. Its aim is, not merely or chiefly to impart knowledge, but to create the capacity of fruitful study in any and every department, and to initiate the student into each, just so far as to furnish him with the data by which he may choose his own pursuits warily and profitably. Thus furnished, you are now to make your election. Let your choice be free, unbiased by the opinions of others,—for you ought to know yourselves better than they can know you; unbiased by sordid motives of interest,—for, even were they to be your law, they cannot be subserved by the choice of pursuits for which you have no taste and no conscious fitness. Elect for your profession, for your chief study, for your prime pursuit, that only which you

can embrace lovingly,—into which you can put what of zeal and energy is in you ; for that, and that alone, is your calling, and *calling* is a Providential word,—it is God that calls you by the several tastes and adaptations with which you enter what shall be your respective fields of labor. But remember that taste, fitness, love, of themselves can never make you masters of your calling. They are of service only as they enable and empower you for thorough, faithful work ; and to thorough, faithful work alone can the coveted prize accrue. Labor then,

“ As ever in the great Taskmaster’s eye ; ”

and from man, and from God, shall come, not in mere words, but in the solid fruits of success, growing reputation, extended usefulness, the plaudit, “ Well done, good and faithful servant.”

Let me now speak of the supremacy of law in the moral universe. I think that our errors of conduct, our moral delinquencies, our censurable habits, almost always have their beginnings in our imagined ability to set aside the divine law without suffering the consequences of disobedience. We all believe in the general truths, that conduct reacts on character ; that one is almost irresistibly led to follow his own example, and thus to make a single wrong act or vicious indulgence a precedent for others of its kind ; that *Obsta principiis*, Resist the

beginnings of evil, is the only safe rule. But one often says to himself, "This is true in the vast majority of cases; but I am an exempt. I see the peril so clearly, that I can guard against it. I can sin without repeating it. I can set myself a bad example, and refuse to follow it. I can stop myself just when and where I choose. I can get the pleasurable revenue of wrong-doing, and arrest myself early enough to shun its shame and its misery."

But the divine law of retribution is universal. It has no exceptions, and no exemptions. And it is a law which works, not only in the outward world, but with even more discernible precision, on the soul itself, on its capacities and proclivities. You cannot yield to any form of temptation without bringing your whole inward nature into sympathy with the wrong you do. You cannot escape the tendency to follow your own example. You cannot at will, after a single lapse, replace yourself where you stood before. You cannot resume to yourself the consciousness of blameless virtue. You cannot wash out the foul stain from your memory, or forget that you have entered into associations which a little earlier you would have scorned and spurned. You cannot fail to find yourself, not, as before, on a table-land which gives you firm foot-hold, but on a declivity on which your standing is insecure, and down which the fiery coursers of appetite and passion may drag you with the bits and reins no longer at your command. The bound-

ary between right and wrong once passed, the border-land once left behind, I do not say—thank God, I cannot say—that there is no salvation for you ; but there is no salvation for you in the way you anticipate, painlessly, shamelessly, by the exercise of your own calm judgment and the energy of your own unprompted will. If it please God in his mercy, with your early deviation from the right, to bring you to exposure, open shame, and bitter self-reproach, so that you shall feel profoundly the full weight of the divine retribution, there is hope that you may retrace your steps, and plant yourself where you will henceforth be safe against temptation. No one who wisely loves the young can fail to rejoice when their first steps in the way of the transgressors are promptly and signally overtaken by the consequences they most dread. Many there are who owe their rising again solely to the speediness and the intense shame and suffering of their fall. But if visible and tangible retribution lingers, think not that it can be evaded. The later, the heavier.

While I speak thus, I rejoice that I address so many who seem not to need these counsels,—who have encountered the temptations of early youth, only to overcome them and look down upon them. No one can recognize more heartily than I do the growth of character, the pure, high, generous tone of manliness, the sound principle and elevated purpose, represented in those of whom we take our

leave to-day. I feel strong confidence in the virtue which has thus far withstood all adverse influences, and has visibly grown under exposure often intensely perilous. Yet I cannot forget that there are for many of you yet severer perils in the near future, when the restraints that have hitherto been around you will be removed, and you must breast temptation, perhaps alone, perhaps in an atmosphere overcharged with a pestilential miasma, among corrupt examples, among those whose maxims and habits of conduct are at once depraved and ensnaring. What you will need above all things else is to take to your hearts the omnipotent sovereignty of the moral law; and, while science teaches you the reign of law in the whole universe, to extend its teachings to the whole realm within, believing that, so long as the eternal God shall live, man will reap as he sows: if to the flesh, corruption; if to the spirit righteousness, peace, joy, everlasting life.

I would next remind you that the sovereignty of law in the moral universe is as full of encouragement as of admonition. It should give you undoubting hope in every virtuous effort, in the whole discipline of character. Here the law which constrains you to follow your own example is unspeakably beneficent. The victory over alluring evil, which you win only by arduous conflict, is the precedent for a next easier conquest, and



for a next still easier, till the temptation, at first formidable, shall be no longer a power which it costs you a struggle to subdue. On the side of good, no less than of evil, conduct reacts on character. Wait not to feel all that you want to feel, in order to do all that you ought to do. Do, that you may feel; act, that you may experience; obey, that you may have the inward blessing of obedience. You know the right,—that is enough for action; but the peace that passeth understanding is not for those who merely know, but for those who, knowing, keep the commandments of God.

There are many duties that seem arduous. They are resisted by indolence, perhaps by false shame, perhaps by associations that appear unpropitious to them. But it is the first step only that costs. Every endeavor in the direction of duty brings your moral nature, your tastes, your associations, more into harmony with duty. Single right acts multiply into habits, habits deepen into principles, principles become solidified into character; and when this stage is reached, the right is immeasurably easier than the wrong, so that sin would be conscious self-denial.

The prophet, in describing the way by which the ransomed Israelites should return from their captivity in Babylon, says: "Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir-tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle-tree." This is verified in every virtuous course, in every true life. The

opening way of duty, of unwonted duty, is, or may be, flanked by thorns and briers. If nothing else, there is the difficulty of newness, of inexperience; and there is wanting, of necessity, the inward joy, which follows, not precedes, right conduct. But as we go on, God plants the fir-tree and the myrtle on our path. And they are evergreen. They cast not their leaves; their coronal of beauty and glory never withers. They may be almost hidden from sight while draped with the gorgeous and bright-tinted blossoms of a happy youth and a prosperous prime; but when the leaves from our earthly life-tree fall, and its flowers lie withered, these trees of God's husbandry shall still shelter and gladden our declining years, our closing days, in their perennial freshness prophecies of the eternal life that shall be ours in the paradise on high.

My friends of the graduating class, let me hope that these parting words of mine will find in your hearts the place that is their due. Keep the law, and it shall keep you. Honor it, and it shall exalt you. Submit yourselves to it, and you shall hold its sceptre and rule by its might. Serve it, and you shall find its service perfect freedom.

Accept, with my counsels, my thanks for the happy memories that you will leave with me, my cordial recognition of the courtesy and kindness on your part that have marked our intercourse, my fervent good wishes for your whole future, in

the life that now is, and in the life beyond life. May a loyal and approving conscience, the praise of good men, the love of your Saviour, the blessing of your God, be yours now and evermore !

## VII.

### AUTHORITY.

(1870.)

“One having authority.”—MATTHEW vii. 29.

ALMOST all questions of belief and conduct are included in the one fundamental question between authority and autonomy. Does there exist anywhere the right to be believed and obeyed? Or are individual consciousness and experience the sole source, test, and ground of truth and duty? If I can help those who are now going to leave us to answer this question wisely, I am sure that the magnitude of the interests involved will make it seem not inappropriate to an occasion like the present.

What is authority? I apprehend that the ambiguity and the misuse of this word occasion not a little of the contempt of authority so rife at the present time. Authority is indeed often employed to denote mere *power*; but it really means *right*,—the right to assent or credence, which sometimes implies, not in itself, but from the nature of the case, the right to obedience or sub-

mission. Right is always the basis of authority. Where there is no right, there may be power, but there is no authority. Conversely, right includes and implies authority; it has, for its due, belief, obedience, or both, as the nature of the case may require.

Authority and progress are often set over against each other, as mutually adverse. So far is this from being the case that they are inseparably allied. Where one is not, the other cannot be. Authority is the ground of almost all our knowledge; it has been the essential condition and the sole means of human progress; and it is equally the condition and means of all future progress. I will first illustrate these propositions with reference to science, in which they are undisputed, and then develop their application to morals and religion, in which they are disputed.

We will select the science of chemistry as a test of these propositions. This science, under its Saracenic name of alchemy, had its centuries of nonage and imbecility, first with the Eastern race that gave it its name, and then among the races of Western Europe. The early alchemists found themselves in what seemed a tumultuous chaos of substances and phenomena. They at first made experiments at random, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred with no results save to demonstrate their ignorance. But gradually, as they pursued their researches, a thread of light gleamed

here and there on their dense darkness; stray filaments of order revealed themselves in the chaos; approximate laws of chemical combination and action were discovered; provisional theories, embracing the few truths that had been ascertained, were established. These laws, these theories, were received on authority; else every new inquirer must have gone over the whole ground afresh, and would have got no further than his predecessors. But each generation of inquirers mounted as it were on the shoulders of those that had gone before them, availed themselves, in the form of axioms, of the results of antecedent experiment and discovery, and on this basis made their own contributions to the science. Nor did their faith in authority belie itself. The laws once discovered were not negated, but merged in more comprehensive laws. The theories once received were not set aside, but made subsidiary to larger generalizations and broader theories. Each generation of chemists from the middle ages downward has bequeathed its quota to the present advanced stage of the science, and the authority of each, legitimately founded and recognized, has borne an essential part in its progress.

Now, suppose that one of the graduating class, determined to become an adept in chemistry, were to plant himself in the attitude assumed in our day by those who deem themselves the advanced thinkers in morals and religion, and to say, "I

abjure all authority. I can take no traditional theories on trust. I have the same implements of investigation that my predecessors had,—as good hands, brain, intellect as they, and the same limitless field of exploration spread out before me. I will believe nothing that I have not tested and verified for myself; nor will I pay even sufficient respect to the beliefs of other men, to give them a foremost place in my experiments, or provisional credence till I have proved their falsity." I need not say what the result would be. He might labor through a long lifetime, and would then die as good a chemist as Adam was in his seventieth or eightieth year.

It may be given to some of you, who have studied earnestly and lovingly in the laboratory, to enlarge essentially the bounds of human knowledge in your chosen department. If so, how will you do it? By receiving on authority what is already known. By working upon the basis of antecedent discoveries. These discoveries you will indeed incidentally verify; that knowledge you will confirm by your own experiments; yet your aim will be, not verification, but a deeper research, a more probing analysis, which you can make hopefully and successfully only as you take your stand on well-established authority.

You may say, however, "I yield to authority in these matters of science, because it is concerned merely with human experiments and discoveries;

and what one man has found out or learned, another man may believe." Very true. But does it make any difference how he has found it out, or learned it? A chemical revelation is at least conceivable, if not probable. Suppose that, in the utter ignorance that prevailed in the fifteenth century, there had suddenly come forth men who proclaimed, as fundamental truths, the precise laws of chemical combination and action that are recognized now; suppose that these men had averred that the laws they promulgated were made known to them by the Supreme Author of nature; suppose that, from that period to this, the laws thus proclaimed had been in a thousand ways verified, in not a single particular disproved by subsequent observation and experiment,—would they rest on a less firm basis of authority than they do now? Manifestly, no. You would justly say, "God is amply competent to teach men chemistry. Whether it was antecedently probable that he would do so, it is not for us to discuss, when confronted by facts that prove the affirmative. The sudden outblossoming of knowledge from gross ignorance—in itself a miracle—renders it not merely probable, but absolutely certain."

We thus see that this science, and by parity of reason every science, rests on a constantly growing substructure of authority, and that there is no intrinsic impossibility that this substructure, instead of growing by slow accretions, might have been built at any one epoch by the immediate agency of that



Supreme Being, who has seen fit to employ in building it successive generations of scientific men.

Let us now turn our attention to the department of morals. Independently of authority, man is irresistibly led to try all kinds of moral experiments. He is an aggregate of appetites, proclivities, passions, both good and evil, and whichever of these is paramount for the time being craves its own gratification as essential to the happiness of the moment. To be sure, in our Christian theories, conscience is supreme among the moral faculties. But if it be so (which I do not by any means doubt), it is yet, without special training, far from being the first to assert supremacy. The lower appetites have so far the precedence of it as to check and dwarf its growth. In any non-Christian community the proportion of those in whom it bears sway is infinitesimally small.

In this condition of things, results, retributive consequences, are man's only moral teachers. One may indulge an appetite or a passion till he has exhausted its power of giving him pleasure, till it begins to ply its scourge and inflict its torment; and then he first becomes aware that he has tried a false experiment. But even then there is small probability that he will make his next experiment in a virtuous direction; for his career of self-indulgence has deadened conscience, and rendered him impervious to the attractions of virtue. If he has self-command enough to stop on the precipitous path to

---

utter ruin, he resorts to a safer, slower vice, which first gratifies, then satiates, then torments him. Only in late old age, after a series of fruitless experiments, when appetite and passion have lost their vitality, and the world has nothing more to offer him, does he begin to perceive that there was a surer way to happiness in purity, integrity, and kindness.

But why are not the results of cumulative experience, as in science so in morals, adequate authority for new generations? For two reasons. First, the pursuit of science enlarges and exalts a man's intellectual nature, attaches weight to his testimony, and endows him with an authority which his fellow-men are not slow to acknowledge; while vice weakens and degrades a man, makes him contemptible, and takes from him all semblance of authority. Secondly, there is no native tendency hostile to scientific truth, no appetency for error, no inward protest against established laws and dominant theories, but it is only the thirst for knowledge and a cordial readiness to welcome it from all legitimate sources that bring one into the field of science; while there are in man's lower nature strong antagonistic forces against virtue.

For these reasons the cumulative moral experience of our race, for the first four thousand years or more of the world's history, had no appreciable influence on the moral beliefs of mankind at large. From the earliest ages to the Christian era there

had been no essential progress in practical ethics. Before, and at that era, the more cultivated nations had successively attained, in luxury, art, and literature, a refinement and perfectness, which more recent times have in vain essayed to reach. But lower depravity than pervaded all classes and conditions of people can never have existed upon the earth; and men who in all other respects were highly enlightened knew not that it was depravity. Nothing is more astonishing than the perfect naiveté with which the writers of the Augustan age—not only the lyric poets, from whom a certain measure of license might have been expected, but men of the most approved gravity and decency—recognize, as entirely consistent with respectability, forms of immorality so foul and infamous as to have passed out of the speech and knowledge of Christendom.

The only portion of mankind that then owned any authority in morals was the Jewish race; and I might show you that, however far they had fallen below their own standard, yet, as compared with the nations of far superior culture with which they were brought in contact, they were immeasurably more virtuous; that they were never addicted to the most degrading vices; and that some right things were habitually done, and some wrong things habitually abstained from, solely on authority which they believed Divine.

But now appeared a Being, who is reported to

have taught and lived moral perfection; whose words were received as from God; whose life was regarded as a transcript of the Divine purity and beauty. He claimed authority, and his authority has been recognized till now by all the greatly good men who have since lived. . We know not a single instance in which his precepts have failed on trial by the test of consciousness; in which obedience to him has had any other than a beneficent result. Moreover,—what was not the case previously,—there has been moral progress within the last two thousand years. Yet, when we analyze it, we hardly know whether to call it progress; for it has consisted solely in the enucleating of principles, or the drawing of inevitable inferences from, his words and his life, and the embodying of those principles and applying of those inferences in the state, the community, the family, and the personal conduct of individuals. It is by virtue of his authority that so many of the wrongs and evils that lay heavily upon humanity have been removed; and that, with all the faults and sins that we lament, there yet is recognized a pure and lofty standard of right, by which men acquit or condemn themselves and others. We see, too, that there is opened within the scope of this authority a field for moral progress, to our finite vision unlimited. There are many departments of life that yet await the application of Christian morality, and many more in which this application is but imperfectly made.

Moreover, we cannot look beyond these principles. We can conceive of nothing higher. Those who disown their authority do not charge them with imperfection, do not deny their intrinsic excellence, but maintain that they are too good, that they restrain man's propensities too rigidly, and impose heavier obligations than it is convenient for him to bear. I want to emphasize this point: Christian morality is never objected to on the ground of its faultiness, but solely because it is better than men need.

My young friends, you will encounter those who deny all authority in morals, who promulgate such precepts as, Obey your impulses, Follow your instincts, Do what seems right in your own eyes, as the sum and substance of morality. Let me submit to you whether, on the very grounds on which you yield to authority in science, you are not bound to yield to it in the conduct of life. In the promulgation of a morality that has not yet needed revision, by one who seemed a provincial peasant, in a corrupt age, and in a nation at best narrow, bigoted, and formalistic,—even were there not the outward attestation claimed in the record, you have an intensely strong probability that these rules of duty came, not from a human brain, but from the Omniscient Mind; in fact, the very same probability which you would own, were a science to spring thus from nothingness to maturity. You have the concurrent experience of good men

and of bad men, in attestation of the perfectness of this morality, and not a single experience of a good man or a bad man which casts doubt on any one of its precepts. Will you not, then, find it the part of wisdom to make trial of it?

I do not apprehend for such as listen seriously to my appeal any very broad departure, at the outset, from the Christian rule of right. But in every direction you may find respectable custom, nay, even respectable opinion and advice, in favor of a little broader license than Jesus Christ would allow, a somewhat freer indulgence, a somewhat less rigid adherence to fixed principles, a somewhat looser construction of the canons of Christian soberness, purity, or integrity, and, above all, the throwing off of every restraint from outside rule or law, and being a law to yourselves. What I most dread for you is the tendency of this divergence, however slight it may appear, to grow rapidly. You know how rapidly the sides of the very smallest acute angle diverge. It is precisely so in morals. These differences, which seem to need a spiritual micrometer to measure them, broaden amazingly fast, and if you start a very little less or other than Christian in your moral habits, by the time you come to yourself and take account of your position, you will find that you have made a most appalling departure, and belong to an entirely different school. In that case I have no doubt you will be conscious of having made a very fearful, perhaps a fatal, mistake,—

perhaps fatal; for when you see what you ought to have been, you may lack the moral strength for your recovery.

Authority and experience are in morals your Prometheus and your Epimetheus,—the former lighting the path before you with fire from heaven; the latter shedding light only on the steps which you cannot retrace. I feel the fullest assurance that, if you live long enough, you will reach in this world, at all events in the world to come, the conclusion of the author of Ecclesiastes: "Fear God and keep his commandments; this is the whole duty of man." But I pray that you may not reach it, as he did, by exhausting all other experiments. I would give you, as my parting charge, that you start where otherwise you must land; that you make your first experiments in the line indicated by that verse of our hymn, which condenses the sum of all practical wisdom, and embraces the entire substance of ethical philosophy:—

"Our glorious Leader claims our praise  
For his own pattern given;  
While the long cloud of witnesses  
Show the same path to heaven."

These steps, my friends, are well-tried steps; that path is a well-worn road. Your Saviour trod it with bleeding feet; but from every drop of his precious blood there has sprung up, instead of the thorn the fir-tree, instead of the briar the myrtle,

and you will find it a way of sacred peace and abounding joy.

I would now speak of authority in religion. Here, too, you will find that, independently of authority, there has been no progress. I have been greatly impressed by the reports of the lectures delivered in Boston during the last winter by the apostles of free religion. No two have agreed, and several of the lectures have been devoted to the formal refutation of those that have preceded them. The lecturers are sure of nothing, not even of the existence of a personal God, not even of individual immortality. I am impressed, also, by the air of venerable antiquity which their speculations have borne. Their range has been between Plato and Lucretius. Some of them reach Plato's almost pure theism, about which yet hangs a pantheistic haze,—the Deity only semi-detached from the coeternal universe, of which he is not the Creator Spirit, but the developed soul, to be admired rather than worshipped,—at best far short of the eternal Father, the universal Providence, the Recipient of our prayers, the loving Arbiter of our destiny in all time and in all worlds. Others, with Lucretius, behold in the universe only the seething concourse and self-combining *nisus* of primitive atoms, and are ready to say with him, "Ignorance of causes constrains men to submit things to the empire of the gods, and to make over the kingdom to them. The works whose causes they can in no wise




discern, they imagine are wrought by Divine power."

Beyond these limits individual man cannot pass, life is so short, and the universe so vast; while, if authority be repudiated, every man must begin anew, and must work out for himself the immense and numberless problems of creation, being, life, death, an eternal past, an eternal future.

I do not ask you, my young friends, to commit yourselves absolutely and unconditionally even to the authority which I deem Divine. But one of two things you must do. You must take on authority some theory as the starting-point and resting-point for your inquiries; or else you must plunge into the swirling vortex of unfathomable mysteries, without sun, stars, chart, or compass; and in this case you will be a strong and a brave man, if in the lapse of a long lifetime you reach even a pronounced atheism, still more, an embryo theism. You will start, nay, you are resting now, on some authority in religion. You are either quietly reposing on one of the last statements of rationalism, theism, or atheism,—on the authority of some brilliant lecture or article, which, with epigrammatic terseness, or with arguments that assume all that they prove, or with Delphic aphorisms that have a sublime afflatus, but no reasoning, has swept away all the phantasms of Christian faith and reverence; or else you have planted yourself on the authority of Him who claimed to utter and manifest on earth divine and

eternal truth. You, of course, cannot pretend to have studied these subjects thoroughly yourselves, though I trust you will. Meanwhile, as I said, you are taking your belief on authority. Shall it not, then, be on an authority which has the sanction of generations and ages of the wise and the good; to which almost all the great minds of the last eighteen centuries have yielded assent; and, above all, to which those whose mental vision has been purged and clarified by transcendent moral excellence, have rendered their unanimous homage?

You have, indeed, heard superficial objections against Christianity. They are superficial, though imposing; and you therefore hear them in the street, and the railway car, and the club-room. Objections that seem to you not superficial, but profound and radical, are also urged, as if they were the growth of the latest wisdom, the advanced philosophy, the larger scientific generalizations of the nineteenth century, unanswered and unanswerable. They are by no means the novelties they seem. Many of them are old both in form and in substance, and those that are new in form are old in substance. It is not by ignoring them that intelligent and strong-minded Christians have preserved their faith. They have looked them full in the face, have admitted their entire force, and, in despite of them, have still found an immense preponderance of external proof, and, above all, of internal evidence, in behalf of the Divine authority



of Jesus Christ. There are no firmer believers than those who are the most familiar with all the newest phases of scepticism and unbelief.

All that I ask of you is to give Christianity, in your minds, the benefit of the prescriptive authority which entitles it to precedence before all other beliefs, till you have patiently sifted its evidences, examined its witnesses, confronted it with adverse reasonings, and decided upon its claims with the seriousness which befits an affair of such vital moment. Christianity has a right to this prescription. True or false, it has been the most beneficent agency in the world's history. It lies at the basis of our whole modern civilization. It has been illustrated by the greatest names in the annals of our race. It is identified with every form of philanthropy, with every stage of human progress, with all that makes home happy, sacred, and blessed, with all free institutions, with the noblest heroism, with the most generous self-sacrifice. It has for every one of you the holiest associations with the living, the most precious memories of the dead. Think, too, what it assures to you, if it be true,—the love of the eternal Father; the guardianship of a watchful Providence; the aid of Omnipotence in duty; the forgiveness of the sins of which you cannot but be conscious; the tender sympathy of Him who is at once the incarnate power and love of God, and your brother in conflict, trial, and temptation; an immortality based

not on doubtful speculation, but on substantial evidence; the pledge of heavenly blessedness as the certain issue of a faithful and obedient life. What in comparison with this is offered you by any other form of belief or non-belief? Oh, if you have any self-love, you will not suffer yourselves to be cajoled out of this faith by any mere parade of objections or counter-arguments. You will try the foundations on which the piety of ages has rested, on which successive generations of believers have built in the strength and beauty of holiness; and I know that you will find them firm as the throne of God.

My friends, in my pleasant and happy relations with you, I have enjoyed nothing so much as the privilege of leading you, at the commencement and the close of your course, in the survey of the grounds on which our Christian faith presents itself for your profound reverence, your cordial reception, the homage of your hearts, and the consecration of your lives. If I have aided any of you in the establishment of this faith, my gladness and gratitude are beyond my power of utterance. Let me earnestly commend to you the Gospel of Jesus Christ as your guide, your hope, your joy. On your several careers you have, each and all of you, my most fervent good wishes for your success, usefulness, and eminence. But I pray, more than for all else, that you may have success in your high calling as Christians; usefulness through the ex-

ample and influence of pure and holy lives ; the eminence which God bestows on his chosen ones,— which Jesus will pronounce, when he says, “ Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

## VIII.

### THE CHOICE OF A PROFESSION.

(1871.)

“The parting of the way.”—EZEKIEL xxi. 21.

HEREIN lies the joy, the sadness, the solemnity of this epoch. That you who will soon leave us have been together for four years is a matter of no slight or brief importance. You have been building up, not only your own, but one another's characters; and as you part, you will bear with you, not only memories that you will love to recall, but solid portions of one another's interior life, which you will have made forever yours.

In some respects you will still walk together, though apart; in some, it may be hoped that you will move on in even closer ranks. Your mutual friendships are probably stronger and more enduring than any that you will form hereafter; and for those of you who shall live as long as I have, *classmate* will seem a title of kindred hardly less near than *brother*. I trust, too, that to the high type of honor and true manliness which belongs to your training here, there will be among you no

recreants. Let me hope, also, that whatever your future pursuits may be, you will all show yourselves to be men of culture, lovers of good learning, among those pioneer minds that are constantly making aggressions upon the realm of the unexplored, and enlarging the area of human knowledge. Yet more, I earnestly crave for you the higher union of God-serving and Christ-following men; and while my firm trust in Christianity will not admit a doubt that above the scepticism and unbelief through which she now mounts the eastern sky, as the moon through massed and threatening storm-clouds, she will shine forth conqueror and queen, I would have the consecration of our University to Christ and the Church renewed in each successive class, in token of the harmony between true science and an enlightened faith. In these things there ought to be no parting of the way; for in the right and good there is but one way.

Meanwhile, as to your several professions and modes of life, your way now divides. Whatever there has been among you of homogeneousness is dissolved. Those of you who will come together from year to year, while your love for one another will grow stronger, will have less and less in common. Your callings and business associations will replace the class-stamp by their peculiar brands.

But, before the way divides, permit me to offer you my counsel as to the paths which you may severally

take. The choice of a profession, I know, will not seem to you an unfit subject for my parting address.

The time was when a college education was considered chiefly as a portal to one of the three (so called) learned professions. I wish that it were as generally the portal to them now, and that they retained in full their old title to the epithet *learned*. But the range opened for the choice of the highly educated has become much wider. It is now beginning to be well understood, on the one hand, that it is not the profession that gives dignity to the man, but the man to the profession; and, on the other hand, that all honorable callings need a large infusion of the highest culture to ensure for them the maximum of individual success, and of economical, social, and moral benefit to the community.

As regards commerce, the worth of a liberal education was recognized by the late Thomas Handasyd Perkins, the first merchant of his day, who said that he would rather receive into his counting-room a fresh graduate from college, than a clerk who had served a four years' apprenticeship. There is no kind or measure of mental culture that would not either directly aid the farmer in the operations on his estate, or enhance his usefulness and beneficent influence as an employer and a citizen. At the same time, the architect, the engineer, the machinist, the manu-



facturer, unless men of education as well as genius, can neither hold, nor deserve, nor adorn important places in their respective professions; while on the taste, skill, science, and breadth of intellect which they bring to their work, we must depend for the beauty of design which is in itself an educational power of the first order, for the safety and economy of transportation and traffic, and for the improved methods and agencies that cheapen and multiply for general use the products of industry. Journalism is another profession, honored in the few men of large culture and accomplishments who are engaged in it, yet in many quarters claiming of men similarly endowed, redemption from narrowness, stupidity, and vulgarity. We need, also, highly and specifically educated statesmen and government officials, unless by inveterate, yet not absolutely immemorial usage, it has become unconstitutional to fill an office with a well-qualified candidate. Had the finances of the country been managed by men possessed even of such little knowledge of financial science as every graduate of this college has the opportunity of acquiring, our present national debt would have been less than two-thirds what it now is. Whenever our people are driven, as they must be ere long, to confer administrative offices only on men who shall have fitted themselves for their duties, and still more, when our bodies of electors shall choose statesmen to represent them, instead of putting their suffrages at the disposal of

adroit and self-seeking politicians, the public service will present an honorable career for our liberally educated young men.

• I would urge you, my friends, to take into your view the largest scope in determining what you will choose for your life-work. If your preference be for a calling which few liberally educated men have entered, so much the better; for while you will lose nothing for yourselves, you may help to elevate the calling, and to raise the standard of mind and character for those who shall afterward enter it.

In choosing your profession, you need to take at the outset the view of life which you will take at its close. Your prime object in that case will be not position, which, nevertheless, depends not on your profession, but on your fitness for it and diligence in it; nor yet emolument, which, whatever appearances there may be to the contrary, will generally depend on the same conditions,—for the most lucrative calling will keep you poor, if it be not your specific calling from God through the talents he has given you, and if you do not respond to his calling by integrity, industry, and enterprise. Your aim should be to serve God by serving man. This is well expressed in a letter written by the elder Adams, in the year succeeding his graduation at this college. “To choose rightly,” he says, “we should consider in what character we can do the most service to our fellow-men as well as to ourselves. The man who

lives wholly to himself is of less worth than the cattle in his barn." In the spirit of these sound words, the choice of each of you should be of the profession in which he can be the most useful member of society. The public has a right to your best service. For this end you have been trained here, only in part at your own cost, in great part by liberal endowments bestowed not for the benefit of individuals, but for the public good,—for the education of those destined to fill the leading places in their respective communities, to protect and advance the highest and most sacred interests, and to diffuse intelligence, virtue, and piety. In accepting these charities of the dead and the living, you have given a virtual pledge, that you will live not for selfish purposes, but with beneficent aim and endeavor,—that you will render back with rich increase what you have so freely received.

In order to insure future usefulness, you must carefully consult your own tastes and proclivities in determining your course. Let it not be determined by circumstances, by facilities, by the expectations of friends, still less by the hope of finding or making that congenial for which you feel repugnancy. Unless your heart be in your work, your whole mind cannot be in it, and you cannot by any possibility prepare yourselves for substantial success or usefulness in it.

A man sometimes adopts a profession because he thinks he sees his way out of it,—for instance,

law, because, though he is sure that he shall find its work a drudgery, he can pass directly from it into the political arena ; or theology, because, though he has no relish for the duties of the pastoral office, it may be an avenue to successful labor in literature. One who enters a profession with such views is sure to fail in it, and—though there are well-known and brilliant exceptions—the great majority of those who have thus failed suffer lifelong damage in mental capacity and vigor, and flounder on through successive failures in an obscurity which alone renders their example un instructive except in a limited circle. Among the most insignificant and unprofitable members of the community are men who entered some profession with high ambition, not in it, but beyond it, and of whom only a few of their fellow-citizens retain the memory of what they began to be. No man can obtain eminence, or even success, in a profession which he does not love.

But mere taste is not fitness. Whether you have intellectual and moral aptitude for a particular profession, you can ascertain only by careful self-scrutiny and thorough self-knowledge. For this the wide range of our college course furnishes ample materials, and herein consists one of the chief benefits of an extended and diversified plan of study. You leave college with a very inadequate training and discipline in any one department ; but in these four years access has been

sought to your intellect through every avenue. All your powers have been tested, in acquisition, reasoning, analysis, writing, speaking. You have been made more or less conversant with the rudiments of every form of professional erudition and skill; and you can know, if you will, wherein your aptness lies, and wherein it does not lie.

There may be parts or accessories of a profession which seems to you desirable and inviting, while you yet lack the capacity to grapple with its difficulties, to apprehend its subtilities, or to perform essential portions of its work. A profession in which a father has won success and eminence may possess strong attractions for a son; and very probably he may have inherited an aptitude for it. Our Triennial Catalogue shows many instances of this inheritance. Thus of the first eleven Emersons on our list, nine were clergymen, and for considerably more than two hundred years, in various branches of the family, the profession has been transmitted from father to son, with distinguished names in every generation. The Sewalls present a similar instance in the law. Like distinction in surgery gives promise of being realized in the fourth generation of the Warrens. But the same record furnishes not a few instances of the profession in which the father held a foremost place, dishonored in the son who chose it merely as a birth-right. The son who would follow his father must

first be certain that he is heir of his father's specific ability and aptitude.

Again, do not choose a profession because it seems to be peculiarly useful, unless you are sure that you can be useful in it. A good physician is an unspeakable blessing to a community; but not a few enter the profession with the best purposes, whose most appropriate record is written in the bills of mortality. An able teacher holds a place second to none in the honor, reverence, and gratitude of his own and succeeding generations; but how many worthy men are there in our schools and academies, who are not engineers, but brake-men in the progress of good learning!

The clerical profession has suffered greatly from this mistake. Because piety has been not unfitly regarded as an essential qualification for the Christian ministry, it has been too often inferred that every seriously minded young man who can, ought to enter it,—as if there were not equal need of and room for the exercise of the highest religious traits in any and every honorable calling, or as if the undue concentration of Christian principle and character in one profession would not have a most disastrous influence on the whole economy of social life. It is urged, indeed, that the command to preach the Gospel was the parting injunction of our Saviour. True, and it is obeyed by every man who does with religious fidelity what he is best fitted to do, and commends

his religion by an upright, pure, and generous life. The truly religious shoemaker or carpenter, whose capacities are level with his work, does much more efficient service—with no counter-vailing injury—as a preacher of the Gospel, than if he forced himself, through the form of preliminary training, into the pulpit.

The error of which I speak has been actualized in every denomination by charitable provision for the education of its ministers. The money were better thrown into the fire. The generous aid of a youth in obtaining a college education is one of the noblest of charities,—a public more than an individual charity,—as it affords culture of which, in the form in which it can be made the most serviceable, it may be hoped that the community will derive the benefit. The college student is generally at the age, always in the condition, in which it is natural and fitting that he should be dependent on his parents; and if he has none, or has those who cannot aid him, in case his merit is equal to his need, it is an enviable privilege to fill toward him a parent's place. But the graduate or professional student has passed the age of natural dependence, and, if he be unpropped by kindred, it is best for him that he should be thrown upon his own resources. If he be fitted for the pulpit, he will work his way to it without any organized system of charitable aid,—a little later perhaps, but, if so, only with a maturity of character, a

knowledge of mankind, and a capacity of self-help, which will make him wiser, more prudent, and more independent in his profession. Moreover, he will in that case have received no bribe to bias his candid investigation of sacred truth, to bind him to the sect that subsidizes him, or to cast obloquy and odium upon him if his conscience leads him to abandon it. The effect of the system of charitable education is to bring into the Christian ministry a class of young men, of negatively faultless character and of sincere religious principle, but of inferior ability, who have not energy enough to make their own way in the world, and who, in proportion to the liberality with which their sect furnishes supplies, lower in that sect the intellectual standard of the clerical profession, its efficiency and its respectability, and avert from it the view of not a few young men of a higher order who otherwise would enter it. I know very well that this system supports also some who are destined to be shining lights of the Church; but, as I have said, they would generally prepare themselves for the pulpit the better without it, and, in cases where this could not be, private munificence would never be stinted in rendering to them the needed aid.

To return from this digression,—if digression it be,—let me emphatically warn you against a profession, however inviting, for which you are not conscious of the requisite mental endowments and



personal qualifications. You have the germs of them now, if you are ever going to have them. Thus there are some professions which demand a scientific training, and these are not for you, if you have thus far found in yourself a stubborn inaptitude for scientific reasoning and investigation. There are others which require a ready utterance, and for these you are unfit, if under the stimulating influence of college life, you have remained slow, hesitating, tongue-tied. There are others which require the capacity of easy, fluent, graceful literary composition. This you may develop in spite of faults of redundancy, to which every potentially good young writer is liable, and which practice alone can prune away; but if, when you take your pen in hand, neither fresh thought, nor fertile fancy, nor ready wit waits on its movements, but the best you can write is jejune, dry, frigid, nerveless, there may be other callings in which you will achieve eminence, but your pen will never move the world, nor win for you a place in it that you can covet. You have, undoubtedly, all of you, your several proper spheres of service, in which you can merit and attain success and reputation, perhaps distinction. A great deal is thought and said about the inequality of natural endowments. In a college class the diversity is probably much greater than the inequality; and your instructors can remember not a few instances in which students who up to a certain point had seemed hopelessly obtuse and

incapable, have manifested more than talent, even genius, when they reached a part of the curriculum corresponding to their peculiar type of intellect. Talents are specific fitnesses, and the distribution of them is God's plan for such a division of labor that no essential department of service need be understocked or overstocked. By entering a profession for which you have not the requisite endowments, you derange the fitness ordained by a higher than human wisdom; and whenever it is sought by forced means to replenish the ranks of any one profession, or whenever there are in the course of events adventitious circumstances that give to a profession a prestige beyond that of its legitimate duties, immunities, and rewards, the consequence is its decline in real merit, dignity, and efficiency, its crippling and maiming as a member of the body politic, and a corresponding loss to the community of its best service and influence.

I would next advise you, while you make your choice of a profession with the utmost care and deliberation, to make it with the purpose of adhering to it. There will be a period in your novitiate when the zest of new enthusiasm will have passed away, and the difficulties before you will show themselves in their full magnitude. Such a crisis occurs in every profession, and you will not evade it by entering upon a new career. It is simply one benignant phasis of the universal law, that nothing great can be reached without arduous effort,—

an effort which will quadruple your vigor for your life-work.

Finally, while you choose your profession, meaning to excel in it, determine at the same time that you will be its master, not its slave. There are many men who sink themselves wholly in their callings. They regard themselves as mere factors or agencies in the machinery of social life, as simply merchants, lawyers, doctors, or preachers, not as pre-eminently men who exercise their manhood in these several avocations. See that you have a personality all your own, large and deep enough to take in and enclose your calling, so that you shall be a man outside of it, not a mill-horse in it. Thus only can you grow in mind, soul, character. As a mere professional man, and nothing more, you may grow in the knowledge of details, in skill, in adroitness; but your manhood will dwindle, your soul will shrivel, and what might have been individual in you will be obliterated.

My friends of the graduating class, with these counsels accept my fervent congratulations and best wishes. Lose not thought of us; for in the throng of those who will succeed you we shall not forget you. There is not one of you, whose good report will not gladden us, whose future eminence will not give us relief and solace in toil and weariness. Above all, we crave for you such a pilgrimage among things seen and temporal as must issue in fulness of joy in the realm of things unseen and

eternal. May God bless you, guide you, keep you; and may you so learn of your Saviour and follow him, that neither life nor death can separate you from his love.

## IX.

### THE TRUE AIM.

(1872).

“I press toward the mark.”—PHILIPPIANS iii. 14.

I AM less what I seem to be than what I aim to be. What I seem to be may have been shaped by a past beyond my control, or by exterior circumstances for which I am in no wise accountable; but if so, my determined purpose will reject in part, in part assimilate whatever seems opposed to it, as the germinating seed spurns the earth-clods that press it down, and feeds on their vitalizing juices. Those of us who have lived many years, pursuing our ideals all the time, are as far as in youth from overtaking them, if they are pure and high. We are conscious of a better self than has ever been able to show itself,—of a hidden life, nobler than the life that has been made manifest, which needs to be wholly unearthed to appear all that it is. We therefore feel more and more that in the sight of God, and, consequently, in our own righteous self-judgment, we are what we strive and aspire to be. I know not whether to believe or hope that this

discrepancy between endeavor and attainment will be overcome, even in the heavenly life. However that may be, it is here at once the goal and the joy of arduous effort. It will not let us rest; but it gives us a more blissful repose of spirit in incessant movement onward, upward. To old and young alike it is a prophecy of immortality; and to the young it is a prophecy covering the many earthly years that may intervene between the present and the life eternal.

To the young men whom I address for the last time to-day, I wish I could say with the emphasis I feel, You are what you aim to be; your aims are the most real, substantial, enduring thing about you; and they unite in close fraternity those who are thought to differ widely in character, while they often create an impassable barrier between those who bear much outward resemblance to one another.

But here let it be distinctly understood what an aim is. It is more, much more than intention or desire. As to intention and desire, there is no great difference among you. You all mean to be good men, honest, honorable, generous; and even if any of you have transgressed the rules of rigid morality under the stress of strong temptation, and in the exuberance of youthful passion, you do not mean to prolong immoralities of any kind. But good intentions are so far from being an index of character that they are current in the

lowest moral strata of society. You all, too, have similiar desires for respectability, prosperity, a competence at least, affluence if possible. But the aim that makes the character is that in which a man says within himself, "This one thing I will obtain, accomplish, or become, or I will sink and die in the endeavor."

Let us look for a moment at the diversities of character as indicated, and in the young prophesied, by the aims with which different persons start in life. There are, first—I trust, however, not among you—the utterly aimless. "It doth not appear what they shall be," but small men at best, very probably bad men. In youth they are characterized by the ease with which they are influenced, by their evading of labor and responsibility, by their self-forgetting absorption in the pleasure of the moment, by their *ennui* when thrown upon their own resources. The suppleness of their nature makes them pleasant and often helpful companions, and under favorable circumstances they may lead harmless lives, and may acquire reputation for a certain negative goodness. But they are mere drift-wood on the current of society, are always liable to be caught up in the eddies of dissipation and vice; and if so, they lack strength to strike out again into smoother waters, and are whirled about unresistingly, till they sink beneath the flood. Let not the aimless youth imagine that, because innocent, he is safe. His innocence is

that of circumstance, not of character. He has no holding ground. He can promise himself no future. His only security is to rouse himself from his apathy while yet he may, to give himself an aim, to set before himself a mark, and to nerve himself to press toward it with strenuous endeavor.

Others there are who enter life with the predominant purpose of gain. Whatever else they may attain or forfeit, they are determined to be rich. The strong probability is that they will reach their aim; if they fail, they will fail by overreaching it. But in them will be fulfilled the saying of the Psalmist, "He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul." In a young man, even vice is hardly so sordid, so degrading to mind and character, as the greed of gain. It burns out every noble aspiration, every generous impulse. It vulgarizes the very face and voice, and in a man of liberal culture it obliterates every token of noble breeding, and replaces the university stamp by the trade-mark.

There are others whose foremost aim is professional success and eminence. They, however, seldom win the highest places, yet seldom remain in the lowest. Ambition, diligence, adroitness in seizing opportunities, the capacity that grows from concentrated attention and continuous effort, obtain their commensurate reward. But no man is great in his profession who does not aim at some-



thing above and beyond it. What we call the liberal professions merit the name, not because exclusive devotion to them liberalizes a man, but because they themselves have the broadest hospitality, and admit to alliance and co-operation every conceivable attainment of mind and character. Thus there are gifts and graces which would not enable one to be a better coppersmith, or candle-maker, or grocer; but I know of nothing worth learning, having or being, which might not contribute to one's excellence as a lawyer or a physician, a teacher or a clergyman. Therefore is it that a man who limits his aim to professional success narrows the range even of his professional training and endowments. He thus belongs at best to the second class in his own calling, and is known, in the law, as a sharp and subtle practitioner; in medicine, as having more skill than science; in the class-room, as a directing rather than an inspiring mind; in the pulpit, as no mean sermon-wright, but as lacking the power of soul upon soul.

I have said enough of lower aims. Let us then turn our thoughts to the aim which includes all others that are worthy your endeavor. That aim is the perfection of your own being, of your selfhood, the making of yourselves the most and the best that you can,—the development of the greatest possible mass of mind, quantity of character, capacity of thinking, feeling, doing, enjoying. Do you say that this is an indefinite statement? To my mind

it is not only definite, but significant of the most important differences of character that are ever presented to our view. It seems to me that there are many persons who think of themselves merely as instruments adapted to subserve certain ends, not as beings endowed with an independent inward life; and they estimate attainments of all kinds solely with reference to the specific ends they have in view. Thus they perceive the importance of such virtues as have a market value, such as may bring them reputation or profit; but they have no conception of that interior self-culture which bears no visible or tangible fruit. They readily discipline the special faculties and pursue the special studies which they expect to need in their peculiar calling or mode of life, but care not for largeness of mind in all directions, and have no respect for any knowledge which they cannot coin into immediate utilities.

On the other hand, there are those—no less heedful as to what they need to turn to daily account—who deem all the virtues within their scope, and are as solicitous for those on which no eye but God's can ever look as for those which all the world can see; who regard every power and faculty as worthy of all the cultivation they can give it, and who prize all knowledge and every form of wisdom, whether it have or have not any bearing on their outward calling and condition.

The former of these two classes are mere agen-

cies, activities, vitalized and intelligent machines, fitting into their place in the social economy as spokes in a wheel or timbers in the frame of a house, but good for nothing in any other relation or for any other purpose, holding no position in the commonwealth of minds and souls. To name their profession is to describe them adequately. They have no inward life that is recognized even by their own consciousness. Those of the latter class are, first and chief of all, men,—endowed with a life which manifests, but does not exhaust itself in a given outward place or profession, but which from its very fulness is more than adequate for whatever place they occupy, for whatever work they do, nay, makes them masters, ruling spirits, men of mark, in their respective callings, and capable of doing much more beside,—of exercising extended and varied influence, of serving God by serving their generation and their race.

Let us now consider in detail some of the elements of this higher life which I would set before you as your only worthy aim. In the first place, there should be the aim at moral perfection. I have often spoken, both in the pulpit and the classroom, of the vast wealth of moral significance stowed away in the structure and history of words. The Greek verb that is always rendered *sin* in the New Testament has for its primary meaning—a sense in which it is used by the classic authors—to *miss the mark*; thus recognizing faultless per-

fection as man's true mark and goal, of which every instance of wrong-doing is a failure. We always know what is right. When we say we are in doubt, our real doubt is whether it is worth our while to do the right precisely, to the utmost, and at all hazards, or whether it may not be consistent with character and credit to make what is called a selfish, but what is really a self-sacrificing compromise with the right. Many do thus compromise, and yet maintain and deserve the reputation of good men. But they are not the best men. Nor can they be sure of themselves; for while there are not a few who never go beyond very slight deflections from the right, those who make the broadest departures have at the outset no intention or expectation of so doing, but are led out of the way by little and little,—each added deviation so slight as to give them no alarm.

If, with my observation and experience of life, I could stand where you now stand, "at the dividing of the way," and were the maximum of happiness in this world my supreme desire, I should determine, as more essential than all things else, that I would not suffer myself in a single instance to modify, or tamper with, my conviction of the right. You now, in the fulness of young life and budding hope, have many resources for happiness, and do not feel as you will your dependence on your own self-respect for permanent and satisfying felicity. But if you live many years,

the time will come when these resources will be sadly scantied. You will have won all the successes within your reach. The ranks of your kindred and intimates will be thinned; there will be vacant places very near your heart, and in the larger circle and the younger world you will feel that your society is less and less sought and desired. The inevitable doom of decrease and decline will rest on your whole earthly heritage. You will be thrown, to a degree which you hardly know now, upon your own self-consciousness, remembered and present. Then, if you can look back upon a life of pure intent and purpose strenuously right, upon an aim—ever more nearly realized—toward the Christian ideal of excellence, it will be of more worth to you than all else beside. Memory will feed the torch of hope. Conscience will be to you the voice of an approving and justifying God,—“Well done, good and faithful servant.” Your last days will be your best days. Your decline will be culmination. The dawn will brighten as the shadows lengthen. The morning twilight of the eternal day will blend with your evening twilight, and heaven will give you immeasurably more than earth can take away.

But the thickening stars in recent classes on our triennial record remind you that for not a few of you but a brief earthly space may remain; that for some of you the sun will be eclipsed in the morning, for others still, at noon-day. Then every

lower aim will have failed you; you will enter the realm of translated spirits with none of the earthly supports and resources in which you had put your trust; you will stand self-revealed to your own consciousness, in the felt presence of the eye that searches the depths of every soul. But if, while here, you have pressed toward the mark of high moral excellence; if steadfast adherence to the right has been your ruling aim and endeavor,—you have an aim on which no failure rests; it is recognized in its integrity by the all-merciful Judge,—by him who will pardon your unwilling frailty, and place you in that heavenly way of righteousness, on which you will move no longer with halting step and intermitted progress, but as with winged feet, in the blessed society of the unfallen and the redeemed.

But why need I direct your thoughts to old age or death? The strenuous aim at perfection is its own immediate reward; the prize is enwrapped in the very endeavor; and, however bright and glad may be the future that seems opening to any of you, the happiest man among you, from this day onward, is he who, with the most resolute purpose, devotes himself to the pursuit of the right, determined to evade no duty, to shrink from no obligation, and to lead an inward life in which he would want to make no erasure or change, were it to be phototyped for the eyes of the whole universe.

•

I will only add on this head, that I know of no guide to such a life except Jesus Christ, no strength adequate to it except that to whose fountain he holds the key. When, therefore, I ask you to aim at perfection, I ask you to be the loyal and loving followers of him whom to follow is to know, and whom thus to know is in itself eternal life.

I would, in the next place, urge you to aim at a thorough and life-long education. Do not over-rate what has been done for you here. If you have been faithful in your college work, you have learned how to study, and what to study. You have had the vast field of knowledge mapped out before you, and have stopped at here and there a station long enough to learn something of the quality and the richness of the circumjacent region. In further exploring this field, there are two opposite errors which you must shun,—the one, that of being too exclusively specific in your reading and study; the other, that of being too general. By the former, you belittle and cramp your intellectual powers; you get keenness without breadth, skill without depth, conversance with the details of some single science, without any apprehension of its true place and relations with reference to other departments of knowledge. On the other hand, general reading, without definite plan, purpose, or principle, may give you a great deal of miscellaneous knowledge; but it will be shallow and superficial. You will have no command even

of your own resources. The facts, truths, and ideas deposited at hap-hazard in your memory will not lie there in any serviceable order. Your knowledge will never crystallize into science or wisdom. Indeed, there are hardly any minds more utterly vapid and inefficient than those of omnivorous readers. I have known those who, the more they read, seemed only the less capable of thinking, reasoning, or teaching, and who, if they undertook to instruct others, showed that their riches had reduced them to beggarly shiftlessness, so they could only string together ill-digested fragments of other men's ideas, pointless, irrelevant and mystifying.

For those of you who are to be professional men, your respective professions should, of course, fittingly give direction and tone to your study, but should in no wise limit it. Indeed, as I have already intimated, you cannot take a foremost place in your own profession, unless you merit and command respect and confidence by acquisition and ability outside of it. Those of you who enter on mercantile or active life will have less time at your disposal for books; but will and taste can always create opportunity, and your scanty leisure, wisely husbanded, may yield you an ample revenue. You will find it to your profit to select some one department of literature or science in which you are determined to be well-read and level with the newest thought of the time; while beyond this specialty you will avail yourselves of the means of a more general culture.



Deem no knowledge worthless, and spurn no casual source of knowledge. The only book on a tavern or steamboat table, or a conversation with a fellow-traveller on a subject entirely alien from your accustomed range of thought, may furnish information or suggest ideas that will be for your enduring benefit,—perhaps, in some unforeseen contingency, for your specific and essential service. Daniel Webster remarked, not long before his death, that many of the best materials for his arguments on a vast variety of subjects, in the senate and at the bar, had been thus casually acquired, and that he had often in these abnormal ways gleaned important knowledge, which, when needed for immediate use, would not have been within his reach. There is no knowledge of any kind whatever, which, even though it subserve no specific purpose, may not at some point bring you either into more intimate communion with the Creator in his works, or into better acquaintance with man through his industries, or into more pleasant and serviceable relations with individual men on the common ground thus won. Still more, while I would not have you read indiscriminately when you can have your choice of books, there is hardly any form of literature, or any book or article, if only pure, however feeble or ephemeral, that may not suggest seedling thoughts, which in an active and cultivated mind will mature into richer fruit than could ever have ripened in the intellect from

which they issued. Now there are in this regard two very different classes of minds. There are those that seem to close instinctively against whatever does not belong to their own specialty. There are those that entertain all strangers in respectable attire because they may be "entertaining angels unawares;" and many are the angel-guests whom they thus lodge and never suffer to depart. Aim, then, for knowledge and learning both special and general; and, above all, make it truly yours by analysis, reflection, assimilation with the substance of your own intellectual being.

With these two aims, first, for the highest standard of excellence, and—second only to this—for the largest attainable amount of knowledge and wisdom, you are constantly increasing your mass of being, your quantity of intellectual and spiritual life; and in corresponding proportion you are providing for your own enduring and growing happiness. As, with the same material surroundings, the sentient enjoyment of the lower orders of animals depends on their more or less fully developed vitality, so, with the same elements of happiness, the revenue of the human being is contingent on his measure of capacity, mental and moral. He who carries the largest vessel to the fountain can draw the most from it; and he who carries to it a crazy, broken bucket, that can hold no water, will thirst while those around him drink their fill.

One more aim. Regard it as your calling to do all the good you can in every form and way. Make it your prime ambition to be useful. I know that it will sometimes interfere with other ambitions. The time and thought spent in kind offices might often further more selfish ends. You may occupy positions in which the alternative will seem to be service or fame. If so, let service have the precedence, yea, even were it only for your own sakes; for you will always gain more than you bestow. You will verify in your experience the saying of Solomon, "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." The divine Teacher tells us that not what goes into the mouth, but what comes out of it, defiles a man; and the converse of this is equally true as to mouth and hand, mind and heart. What goes from you in kind words and deeds, enriches, amplifies, ennobles you as nothing else can. Benevolence develops resources, inspires wise counsels, and quickens the powers no less than the affections. The wars of our own time have not matured in those who have served in them a tithe of the ability, the genius, that has been, I will not say called into exercise, but created, in the missions of mercy to the battle-fields and the hospitals; and if posterity shall charge its memory with any individual names in connection with these wars, it will be with the heroes and heroines that have sought to save, not to destroy.

In urging upon you beneficence as a prime aim, I do not refer to pecuniary benefits. Some of you will no doubt have, in this direction, but limited means. But there are many services which a liberally educated man has the constant opportunity of rendering, such as the care of educational institutions and interests, the advice and encouragement of incipient students and those struggling under embarrassments and difficulties, aid in literary undertakings, efforts to raise the standard of culture in the surrounding community. A scholarly man may shut himself up to his own pursuits, in haughty or selfish isolation, with the purpose of achieving for himself superior position or reputation; or he may make himself felt as the centre of a constantly enlarging circle of benignant influence in behalf of good learning and general intelligence. In the former case, his success is problematic, and if realized, very probably unfruitful; in the latter, his success is certain, immediate, and full of blessed fruits for himself, no less than for those among whom he dwells.

I have thus set before you the aims with which I earnestly hope and pray that you may start on your several life-paths,—the highest standard of character, the utmost attainable measure of knowledge, and the most persevering fidelity in the offices of a liberal-minded and large-hearted beneficence.

Forget not, that while you are just entering on an earthly, you have already entered on an eternal

career. These are the aims which belong equally to the life on this and on the farther side of the grave,—the aims, which, so far from suspending, you will pursue with only intenser fervor when you pass beyond these time-shadows. The grave that has just closed over one but lately with you \* adds a force beyond any words of mine to the exhortation, that you so live among things seen and temporal as you would hope to live among things unseen and eternal. While you cherish loving memories of the classmate who has gone from you, and recall in him the traits that at once commended him to your esteem and affection, and gave rich promise of usefulness and honor, let his sudden departure, as it has opened, keep open to your aim and endeavor the life beyond death, where all that is worthily achieved and attained on earth receives the seal of immortality.

I trust that in mind and character you have won here much that cannot die,—that of your college-life there are happy memories not only for future years in this world, but also for heaven and eternity. May God Almighty lead you and bless you. May his spirit give you light, peace and joy. May the faith of Christ be your safeguard in temptation, your support in trial, your assurance and pledge of the life everlasting; and may his love and benediction be with you now and evermore.

\* Otis Everett Allen, who died June 8, 1872.

## X.

### TREASURES IN HEAVEN.

(1873.)

"Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."—MAT. vi. 20.

WE pity or despise the man who has money, and is too mean to use it, or who possesses objects of taste, yet lacks the power of appreciating or enjoying them. Still more, if the miser's money would increase by being spent, or the works of nature or art grow more rich and beautiful through the ministry of the eye that feasted on their beauty, should we marvel at the stolidity of him who could possess them without using or enjoying them. May not some of us justly lay ourselves open to animadversion on not unlike grounds? Our beliefs, our hopes may be packed away in archives of memory, whence we shall never take them out for use, or held as possessions to be jealously defended, but never enjoyed; while by use they are amplified and intensified, by enjoyment made beautiful and fruitful.

Most of us not only believe in human immortality, but have a certain horror for those who

deny it. We cannot brook the thought of annihilation. Even those of us who are willing to cut ourselves adrift from Christianity take with us into the outside world the best of its gifts, the immortal life which, as I believe, is brought into clear light first and only in the Gospel. But are we not prone, rather to lay this hope away for contingent needs in the darker experiences of life, and under the shadow of death, than to put it to current use, and thus to make it a present and perpetual joy? The consequence is, that when we most need it, because it has been suffered to remain unfamiliar, it is less clear and strong than we desire; whereas, if utilized, it would have grown more and more vivid,—if rendered familiar, it would have become, if not in logical strictness, yet virtually, an element of our consciousness.

Our earthly future has an immense power over our present; why should our eternal future have less power? We make careful and costly provision for what we expect will be our destiny here; why less, for the destiny which may be nearer than any of the epochs to which we are wont to look forward?

I address young men entering, full of promise and hope, on honorable careers, in literature, art, commerce, and professional life. I should be sorry to know that there is one of you who does not believe himself immortal, and would not cling to this belief with even agonizing earnestness, were it

seriously assailed or threatened. Why should not your immortality constitute an essential element in your aims, plans and endeavors? You know how persistent are the habits and proclivities of mind and character formed in youth, with what increasing difficulty they are changed, nay, how little there is of the will to change them. You find that they survive the extremest vicissitudes of circumstance and condition. Must not the same laws extend into the life hereafter? Must you not take with you the traits, mental and moral, which you have formed here? Have you any reason to suppose that they will suffer change in death? Immortality, if it mean anything, means the continuous identity of being; else it is not immortality, but annihilation of the being that was, and the substitution of a new being to bear his name and fill his place. But if you are really the same being on either side of the death-river, there is no need that you go hence poor and bare. There is wealth which you may carry with you, if you will acquire it here; and, above all, there are wealth-producing energies of mind and character—powers, tastes, tendencies, virtues, loves—which you may so train and cultivate here, that they shall start you on high vantage-ground in the unseen world, fit you to utilize its opportunities, to harvest its fruits, to enjoy its society, to hold an honored place in its worthy fellowships. At the same time this wealth is the most availing provis-



ion for your earthly well-being; these wealth-producing energies are those which will yield you the largest revenue of earthly honor and happiness.

Let me ask you to pass in review with me some of the elements of this enduring wealth, portions of which, I trust, you have been accumulating during these years that we have passed together, and which, I hope and pray, may ever remain foremost in your esteem and endeavor.

First of all, let it be borne in mind that whatever of moral and spiritual worth and capacity you have gained, you have gained for eternity. I trust that in this regard your college-life has not been fruitless. While there are exceptions (and they, perhaps, numerous enough to give some color of truthfulness to those who think ill of us), I am year by year greatly impressed by the growth of character in the right direction, in the successive classes that go from us. I have no doubt that the greater part of you carry hence a measure of self-respect, of honorable feeling, of high purpose, of the will and power to resist and overcome wrong and evil, and thus of all the elements of true manhood, far greater than you could have acquired under any other auspices. I rejoice in all the good scholarship that is developed here; but I believe that our system—in which I include with emphasis the mutual influence of student

upon student, and the action of collective opinion upon individual character—forms many more true and high-minded men than it makes accomplished scholars,—ennobling, for their lives long, not a few who, as to their literary pursuits, have taken for their motto,

“He that is low need fear no fall.”

But how would this diligence and thrift as to the moral and spiritual life be stimulated by an abiding sense of its everlasting worth and efficacy ! If you will but say, each within himself, “As I live and die here, I must resume my being in the life to come ; the forces of character that urge me here must start me on my eternal career ; the wealth of soul which I accumulate here must be my capital in my new abode,”—you could need no other, you could have no surer impulse in every walk of duty, in every exercise of active virtue.

As I strive to enter in thought into the future life, I cannot but feel that we shall be even more dependent there than here on our own self-respect. Here there is an-outward and a lower life, into which one can retreat and shut the doors behind him ; and for him who is content with the tawdry glitter of the outside walls, or the coarse luxury of the basement, and never looks into the inner, upper rooms, it may signify but little that they are empty, disarranged and ruinous. But when the body falls away,—when the walls of sense are trampled down

in the dust of the grave,—the soul must needs appear to itself and to its fellow-spirits just what it is. Eternal self-communion, direct and inevitable as it cannot be here, must be our destiny; and it is of unspeakable moment that this be a communion which we can hold with complacency and delight. What, then, must be the condition of the soul that is foul with the soil of guilt, or the slimy trail of meanness,—the soul that knows itself to be contemptible, and expects to save itself from contempt here only by living under cover? If you believe in your own continued identity after death, you cannot be willing to enter the spiritual world in disgrace, even though what merits it may be hidden from all the world here.

Do not forget, with your own identity, God's identity. I think that a degree of carelessness as to spiritual purity, culture and growth is cherished in many minds by a vague trust in the Divine mercy, as being more lax and indulgent in other spheres of being than it is found to be in this world. God is, indeed, infinitely merciful, as truly so now and here as he ever will be, and in all time and worlds too merciful ever to divorce character from destiny, conduct from retribution, virtue from happiness, or moral evil from misery. He is the same in heaven as on earth, among souls alive from the dead as among souls still in the fleshly tabernacle. The law, "As a man soweth so shall he reap," is his law always and everywhere. The

only conceivable difference is, that the working of this law is here sometimes concealed from sight and unrecognized in consciousness; while in the life to come every soul must confess and feel its power.

While, then, you rejoice in whatever of moral and spiritual good you have attained, let me urge you, above all things else, to aim ever higher, with the life and precepts of your all-perfect Saviour for your guide and goal, and with the assurance that in pure, true, faithful lives, in the love and service of God and man, in all the finer graces of advancing excellence, you are laying up treasures in heaven.

In the next place, I would have you regard knowledge, not merely as precious for its earthly uses, but as a possession and a joy forever. It cannot be that the scholar's aim and endeavor are earth-bounded. In the various departments of science and literature, you have been, whether you knew it or not, tracing the embodied thoughts of the Infinite Intelligence, the inspiration of God in the soul of man, the vestiges of the Divine providence in the government of the universe. You have entered on fields of research that will stretch on before you at every stage of your eternal progress; for how can any avenue of knowledge be closed by the opening of the soul's prison-gates,—by the downfall of these fleshly walls which only circumscribe thought, imagination and intellectual

enterprise? So far from this, we may well conceive that the direction which the mind has assumed here will determine its favorite pursuit in the infinite range of its eternal career. There the introspective philosopher will be ever learning, in his clarified consciousness and beatific experience, more and more of the powers and limitations of the finite mind, its laws and its methods, its relations to nature, to fellow-beings, and to its Author. There the student of the works of God may take the wings of the morning, may glance from star to star, may trace omnipresent law from bound to bound of the universe; or with microscopic keenness of vision may follow out the same omnipresent law in the minute forms in which Infinite Wisdom has globed itself, no less than in world, sun and system. There he who has loved to explore Providence in history will have spread before him records of the omnipotent Providence, in realms of being infinite to the finite, finite only to the Infinite Mind.

But what a contrast between the two states! Here our knowledge abuts on impenetrable ignorance. The more we learn, the wider is the expanse of the unknown, into which we launch our probing thoughts in vain. In every department we reach impassable barriers where we set up our fence-words—*general terms* we call them—indefinable, denoting only that with our present implements of investigation we can go no farther.

"Lo! these are a part of His ways; but how little a portion is known of Him!" is ever the lowly confession of true science, which, with instinctive modesty, calls itself philosophy, not wisdom,—the loving quest, not the fully realized attainment. There, philosophy will ripen into wisdom. In our ever more intimate conversance with the Supreme Intelligence, we shall gain ever profounder and broader views of its unveiled mysteries. Devotion and love will be cognitive faculties, as bringing us into ever closer relation with Him in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; while larger views of His truth will nourish ever more glowing worship and more fervent praise.

Let no one, then, consider his student-life as conterminous with his college-life; but whatever you have gained in knowledge, in the love of knowledge, in the capacity of acquiring it, I trust you will regard as treasure that will stand the test of the death-change, and will form an essential element in your eternal well-being.

Another prominent aim of your academic course has been the culture of taste. It were, indeed, to be wished that we had a richer apparatus for æsthetic education through the eye,—more beauty of form, more works of art, structures that would command, not astonishment, but admiration. Yet a large portion of your literary training has had this end in view; and even those of you who have had the most limited opportunities of travel

and personal observation have been enabled to enter into the very soul of art, and to behold its most authentic embodiment, in the one only language whose every utterance is its inbreathing, and in writings whose artistical perfectness may be approached, hardly equalled, never exceeded.

I cannot but regard æsthetic culture as pre-eminently a training for the higher life, not only through its humanizing and refining influences, and its natural alliance with all that is generous and noble in conduct and character, but because it seems to me that, with all that charms and enraptures us here, we are but as on the threshold of a temple of universal nature, in which myriad-formed beauty enshrines and mirrors the joy-giving spirit of God. No attribute of the Creator is more richly manifest than his love of beauty. In him reside the archetypes of all that the eye rejoices to behold,—of all the harmonies that float in upon the soul, from string or organ, voice of man, or bird-song. For all elevated tastes he has provided nutriment as profusely as for our most imperative lower needs. In the bloom and verdure of spring, in the rainbows and sunset clouds of summer, in the kaleidoscopic landscape of the autumn forest, in frost crystals, sheets and mounds of driven snow, and all the hoary majesty of winter, his beauty-breathing spirit is drawing ever near to our souls, and awakening those sentiments, which, even in the undevout, are almost worship,

and in the heart that rejoices in his love are an unceasing ritual, incense and anthem of praise.

Let it not be forgotten that man, in the pride of his art, is but the copyist, not the creator, and least of all the creator when he seems most original. When I have looked on the pictures in which human art has reached its supreme perfection, I have felt less the glory of man than the praise of God,—I have recognized Divine inspiration, as I ever rejoice to do in the God-breathed written Word. I know that the forms and colors that thus grew under human fingers were drawn from models fashioned by a higher than human art. And if I can be both glad and worshipful in presence of these copies, can I suppose myself, in the higher life to come, insensible to their originals? Rather, is not the capacity of joy so pure and lofty awakened in us here, because there is infinite scope and food for it in every portion of that universe, in one of whose outlying provinces we are cradled, to become, in the resurrection, free of all its realms? Thus I must believe; and when the author of the Apocalypse lays all of nature that we now behold under contribution, and piles splendor upon splendor, to shadow forth the glories of the New Jerusalem, the very power of painting these gorgeous images on the retina of my inward vision is to me prophecy and proof of more of beauty in heaven than eye has yet seen, or ear heard, or heart conceived.



Let not, then, your æsthetic nature—wooded into activity by classic song and fable—be suffered to become quiescent. For many of you art; for many of you Nature, mother and queen of Art; for all of you the purer literature of earlier and later times, redolent of nature, yet taking shape only under the moulding hand of high art,—may develop, in ever-growing delicacy and susceptibility, the sense of the beautiful,—a faculty inestimably precious even for its earthly uses (for without it virtue looks unlovely, and holiness lacks grace), but, more than all, the jewelled key to infinite wealth of the Divine handiwork that shall inspire endless praise and adoration in heaven.

There remains for our consideration a feature of your experience which I want to present in an aspect which in coming years you will appreciate more fully than you can now. I refer to the friendships which you have formed here. If college-life were good for nothing else, it yet were no waste of time to gain the fast, firm, genial, lifelong friends that we make in our college years. There are no friendships so hearty, so unselfish, so unreserved; and they outlast all others. Like generous wine, they improve by keeping, and may have their value tested by their year-mark. You will find many of my age, or approaching it, who, next to their own households, regard their classmates as their nearest kindred.

But there is a reverse side to this picture. You

can hardly hope that your class will be wholly unstarred in its first Triennial ; and year by year, as you come together, saddened memories will replace the forms of those whom you most loved to meet. Nor is this all. Of those still upon the earth there will be some, dearly cherished, but seldom seen,—in distant cities or lands, or, if near, so care-cumbered that they can yield only rare and fragmentary enjoyment of their intercourse,—leaving you hungry, not satisfied with their society. Some will part next week with warm mutual regard, and yet never see one another again upon the earth. There is hardly any experience so futile and empty—if we look not above this world—as the forming of so many sincere and often fervent friendships that yield us hardly any revenue, with persons who pass out of our sight and our sphere as soon as we have learned to prize them.

But I rejoice to read in this very susceptibility to friendship, in this power and tendency to multiply heart-bonds of kindred and affinity beyond our capacity of utilizing them, the assurance that we are thus laying up treasures in heaven, providing friends that shall be ours forever.

I would have you feel, then, that you lose nothing and risk nothing by these attachments which seems so brief and fruitless ; and when, in after years, there shall come over you, with almost painful vividness, the remembrance of some early friend, long unseen, perhaps never to be seen again

in this world, let it be as a breath on the wind-harp of prophecy,—let memory merge itself in hope,—let the heart turn for its satisfaction to that home,

“Where—o’er bright gates inscribed NO MORE TO PART—  
Soul springs to soul, and heart unites with heart.”

These, then—moral culture, knowledge, taste, friendship—are among the imperishable treasures which you may carry with you from your college life. They are your best earthly treasures. See that they grow with every coming year. Whatever your avocations, regard these as your high calling from God, as the work, the aim, the ruling purpose of life,—purity and sanctity of spirit and character; knowledge that, as fast as it is acquired, shall be transmuted into wisdom; love for all that is beautiful in nature and art; friendships so loyal and unselfish that neither time, nor distance, nor death can dissolve them.

I congratulate you on all the honor that you have worthily won, on all the happy memories which you will carry from these halls, on the avenues to success and eminence that are opening before you. Take with you, for each and all, my fervent good wishes. May God keep and guide you. May his Word and his Spirit give law to your lives. May his Gospel feed in you the faith and hope through which you will commence on

earth the life everlasting. May you so pass through things seen and temporal, that you may attain fullness of joy in the realm of things unseen and eternal.

## XI.

### HEBREW, GREEK, AND LATIN.

(1874.)

“ Hebrew, Greek, and Latin.”—JOHN xix. 20.

THE inscription over the cross was written in these languages, as representing the three cosmopolitan nationalities of the time,—the Jews, most numerous, indeed, in their own metropolis, yet swarming everywhere; the Greeks, their states conquered and dismembered, themselves—whether as slaves or adventurers—carrying their arts, humanities, and vices through the whole extent of Southern Europe and Western Asia; the Romans, in civil and military occupancy of all important posts in the civilized world. These languages were and are typical of the nations that employed them,—emblematic of their several styles of culture: the Hebrew, though harsh, sonorous; though rude, grand; though meagre, lending fit utterance for the loftiest thought and feeling;—the Greek, the counterpart to the ear of the fairest scenes on which human eye has ever rested;—the Latin, terse, rigid, and intense, with no loose joints or feeble idioms. Thus we have the Hebrew people pre-

eminently religious ; even when idolatrous, in sad earnest ; and, except in those early episodes of false worship, true to the God of their fathers as no other nation has ever been ;—the Greeks, in art, taste, and elegant culture unequalled in their own time, unsurpassed in all time ;—the Romans, until foreign grafts outgrew the native stock, law-giving, because law-abiding ; conquerors, because self-mastered ; kingly, because loyal.

Most fittingly were these languages united over the cross ; for the cultures which they represent are blended and unified in the character formed under the shadow, or rather in the guiding light, of the cross. I have named them for my text, as indicating the scholar's true aim and culture.

I. The Hebrew leads, and must lead. Religion must be queen, or she has no place. She must rule the house, or leave it. In a merely intellectual aspect, it is no small loss that he sustains who neglects the records of our religion ; for in the Scriptures, if nothing else, we have the exhaustless repository of great thoughts, the feeder of lofty imaginings, the mine where one always unearths more than he seeks,—gold when he digs for silver,—rubies, emeralds, and diamonds when he looks for gold. What surpassing genius has the Sacred Word nourished and fructified ! Bunyan's prose-epic of *Pilgrim's Progress*—in some aspects the greatest work in our language, probably more read, oftener re-perused, and by a larger range of ages

and conditions, than any book but the Bible—draws from the Bible all its forms and colors, its imagery, its sweetness, its strength. Nor do we less feel the pre-eminence of our sacred source of inspiration, when Milton, in the only other English epic worthy of the name, blends from his affluent learning an untold wealth of classic lore with Christian thought and imagery, only to show how thin and feeble is the flow of Castalia and Helicon compared with the rush and swell of the waters of Zion.

But the scholar needs more than the literature of the Bible. He has his providential mission as exemplar, instructor, guide of the less privileged. His culture, for good or for evil, raises him above his fellows. His light, whether with baleful or benignant ray, is set where it cannot be hidden. His tone of thought and feeling is diffused farther than he can trace. In many of our New England villages, and in special circles even in our large cities, you will see the foremost mind reproduced on every hand, its opinions unconsciously imbibed, its moral sympathies and proclivities spontaneously imitated, its tastes made dominant. Such a position many of you, my friends, will hold. Are you fit for it, if you lack God's best gifts? If religion be not a name, but a divine and eternal reality, can you fill your due place in society without its consecration and its power?

Our age demands more in this direction than was

ever before required of leading minds. There is an intense and pervading secularism. We can account for it, indeed ; but it none the less needs to be counteracted and overcome. It is owing, no doubt, to the vast material progress of our time, to steam and telegraph, to the awakening from their age-long slumber, and harnessing to human industries, of giant world-forces. The living spirit in the wheels—the living, shaping spirit of God in the works of man—is ignored by the multitude, and craves to be recognized, enthroned, adored. It is for the master-minds of the age to redeem our culminating civilization from the godlessness which will be its ruin, to make men feel the power of a higher life than that which lives by bread alone, to convert the multitudinous clangor of the world's industry into a sublime rhythm of praise to the All-Inspirer and All-Giver. We want Christians, not only as professional teachers of religion, but even more, in the walks of active service,—men who shall show a working piety ; who shall be thoroughly in the world, yet as thoroughly above the world ; who shall demonstrate the possibility of the life of God in all the ways of man ; who shall reverse the sacrilege of the Jewish hucksters, and make even the house of merchandise our Father's house.

Our age has, also, strong sceptical tendencies,—due, I believe, not, as it is often alleged, to its science, but to its materialistic habit of thought and feeling, and thence imported into science,



whose true spirit is that of reverential awe before the realm of the yet unknown, which only grows as knowledge grows, and expands as the area covered by man's research enlarges. There is nothing in the ascertained truths of science which militates against the Christianity of Christ and his Gospel; nor yet, as seems to me, is there necessarily an anti-Christian element in prevailing theories that have not grown, and perhaps may never grow, into science; though, if there were, these theories would have no validity against a religion which has its double witness in impregnable historical testimony, and in the undeniable consciousness and experience of a multitude of believing souls that no man can number. Yet there is scepticism in the air. There are vague doubts afloat. There are new departments of inquiry and investigation that still lack and crave Christian baptism. There are fundamental questions at the basis of all belief and knowledge, with which the mind of the coming generation must wrestle. To such work Christian scholars alone are competent. The pulpit can no longer keep to the old paths. Respectable ignorance and the humdrum repetition of antiquated formulas will do more toward unsettling than toward establishing faith. There are needed for the sacred office skilled and trained minds that shall add to their faith knowledge,—that shall see all round and through falsities and fallacies,—hospitable minds, too, that are not afraid to enter-

tain strangers, and can recognize in them angels, if angels they be.

But, if Christianity is to be defended, it cannot be solely or chiefly by professional champions. The work must be fully shared by educated minds in every sphere of life. The faith of the coming age is contingent on their attitude. The prestige of their belief alone can avert infidelity on the part of the many who cannot try the spirits for themselves, but always lean on authority. Above all, Christianity will have its impregnable defence, its irrefutable argument, in the consecrated lives, the exalted Christian virtue, the beauty of holiness manifested by those whose extended culture gives them commanding influence, and makes them the creators of opinion, belief, and character in an ever-widening circle.

My friends, if it be not a mere farce that you are enacting in these sacred valedictory rites; if you mean them and feel them, as I know you do, —they have for you a mandate of imperative duty. For your own sakes, religion should be the rock-foundation on which the fair fabric of your honorable and useful lives shall be built. Think not that the corner-stone can be inserted in later years, before the winds and rains beat upon the house. They will never beat more fiercely than in the next ensuing period of your lives, as you enter on your career, under God, artificers and arbiters of your own destiny; and the house on the sand stands

always at their mercy. Nor is your obligation to society less sacred than that to your own souls. Gifts to Christ and the Church of saints long since passed on to heaven have been lavished on your nurture here. You are heavily in debt to their prayers and offerings. You can be worthy of their benefactions only by giving your best service to the truth of God and the establishment of his reign among men.

II. The Grecian element of culture next claims our regard,—second only to religion in its worth to the individual soul, the inseparable ally of religion in the progress of the community and the race. The scholar should be a man of taste, of refinement, of gentle nurture. There have been prodigies of boorish erudition, of immense book-learning, with no æsthetic training, out of gearing with society, rude in manners, coarse in speech, brutal in controversy,—men whose scholarship, indeed, has towered up into undue eminence because there was nothing else of them, as a hill may seem a mountain when it rises from an unbroken plain. Such men were Bentley and Porson; and what have they left but their names? Possibly the settlement or the more hopeless unsettling of some disputed text in an ancient author, or the resolution of some supposed fact of Greek or Roman history into a myth; while, so far as their personal influence could go, like guardian mastiffs, they warned off aspirants from the height on which

they stood. Compare with such men Thomas Arnold, who had enough of mere learning to give him fame, yet was not celebrated for it, because he so won all who knew him by the grace and beauty, the fair humanities, incarnated in his mien, intercourse, and influence; by the charm he gave to whatever he said and did and wrote; by his genial spirit, with its outgoings in every form and way in which he could minister to human happiness and well-being. His spirit multiplied itself in all directions, and is still working in unnumbered minds and hearts, in men of the widest diversity of condition,—men whom his learning would not have made wiser, nor his talents impressed, nor his virtues attracted, but for the Hellenistic culture superadded to the Hebrew.

Prime importance should be attached, under this head, to personal refinement, not in the superficial sense in which the word is currently misused, but to purity, delicacy, gentleness, and grace in thought and feeling, and thence in mien and manner. The scholar falls below his calling, if he fails to be a Christian gentleman; and it is only by the traits that belong to this highest style of character that his advanced intellectual culture can become an intenerating and elevating influence in the society around him.

The scholar should also cultivate his æsthetic capacity by such conversance as he may have—if not by direct observation, by paintings, models,

and engravings—with the fairest monuments of ancient and modern art. He should study proportion, symmetry, and harmony in form and color. He should know the beauty that dwells in simplicity. He should learn to abhor shams in architecture, ostentatious incongruities in ornament, the substitution of cost and glitter for fitness and grace, that he may bear his part in diffusing purer tastes and a more genuine love of the beautiful. I lay stress on this culture, not for its own sake alone, but on higher grounds. It was not without reason that Plato identified the true, the beautiful, and the good. Coarseness and tawdriness are demoralizing. Mean tastes and low pleasures are near kindred, and love to dwell in the same house. On the other hand, conversance with fair forms and just proportions indicates or creates a style of character congenial with all that in soul, speech, and life, is lovely and of good report.

Nearly akin to art-culture are simplicity, ease, and grace in written style. The art of expression is too little studied among us. We who write are too prone to content ourselves with words that will embody and convey our meaning. We forget that there is a double passage to be forced by what we write, beyond the reader's outer mind, his mere apprehensive faculties, to the inmost shrine of reflection, imagination, conviction, feeling, sympathy. What is rudely, though clearly written

makes its way only through the outer wall, knocks in vain at the inner, proves without convincing, appeals without striking any answering chord, besieges the soul without breaching or mining it. The thoughts that breathe demand words that burn. The sword of truth that pierces to the marrow is not a bowie-knife, but a Damascene blade.

The best culture for style is to be obtained by familiarity with the classic models. Were it only for our English, we should maintain our familiarity with the ancient tongues. The versatile grace of the Greek, the directness and force of the Latin, are efficiently welded in our own language, which in its Norman elements has an exhaustless wealth of beauty, and, in its incisive Anglo-Saxon forms, a vigor, precision, and point unequalled among the other modern tongues.

Be ambitious to write, not much, but well,—and much only if it can be written well. Put the best that is in you into whatever you utter or print; and you will most efficiently serve, not only your own reputation; but—what is of much greater importance—whatever cause you advocate, whatever truth you expound, whatever aim you pursue. Study the art which in its simplicity at once conceals and reveals the labor it costs, the elegant diction which adorns whatever it clothes, the mellifluous flow of words which hides strength in its sweetness, convinces by persuading, storms by sapping, conquers without show of arms.

III. The Latin element, the Roman culture, is pre-eminently that of law, order, citizenship, patriotism. Its essence is best comprehended in that one word *loyalty*, which denotes not, as it is often employed to mean, subservience to rulers, but submission to impersonal law,—and, if in any sense to men, to them only as the representatives and trustees of law. What we need in our country more than all else is reverence for law as divine and absolute. In a republic we bear a double part, as sovereigns and subjects, as ordaining law and amenable to it, as the sources of the power to which we owe profound submission and unreserved obedience,—obedience, except in the rare case of an actual conflict with conscience, and then the acceptance of the penalty attached to disobedience.

It is in the separation of these functions that lies our chief danger, our besetting sin. There is no tyranny so severe and so galling as republican tyranny, when those who make and execute the laws assume independence of their fellow-citizens; for because the despotism is impersonal, many-headed, and vague, the governed know not where or how to direct their protest and resistance,—because it is changeable and may be reformed by change, the governed wait and hope. For the last fourteen years or more, there have been multiplied in the administration of our revenue laws the grossest enormities of extortion and

oppression, such as would not have been dared or endured under any (so-called) absolute government in the civilized world, but which have here been borne and smothered till the darkness would no longer hide them. At the present moment, there is no other government this side of Turkey that would venture to rule so exclusively for its own interest, and with such supreme indifference to the claims and needs of its subjects, as this very government under which we live; nor is there any other government under which the rulers can command so complete immunity from the laws which they make and administer.

One chief reason for this state of things is that our scholars, our educated men, those who ought to lead opinion and give tone to sentiment, except when they have themselves aspired to official stations, have gradually withdrawn from their political trust and duty. While our educated men have multiplied faster than our population, and the standard of education has been continually rising, the average culture of our legislators is much lower than it was a generation ago. While in our colleges there is no small amount of instruction in finance and public economy, the first rudiments, the very axioms of financial science, are, for the most part, unknown by our officials and law-makers. The greater part of our men of high culture not only shun all public charges, but hardly concern themselves with the candidates to



be presented for their suffrage, and furnish a larger contribution to the list of non-voters than all other classes together.

Scholars, let not this reproach rest on you. So far as you have leading minds, you are preordained to rule in the republic, if not by office, at least by suffrage and by influence. You have no right to evade this trust. The exercise of the functions of a citizen, openly, constantly, conscientiously, is a duty to which you are born, and from which only exile or death can discharge you. Office, indeed, you are not bound to seek; and in our time it is only they who seek that find. But if men of large intelligence, broad culture, and honest hearts, would only be as truly loyal citizens as they are foremost men, there would be some hope of the return of those good old days, when, like Cincinnatus from the plough, men were forced into office because their country needed them, and filled the highest trusts as literally posts of service.

But the Christian scholar, the man of cultured and forceful intellect, the patriotic citizen, will be true to his obligations as a subject no less than as a ruler, not overriding law in the delusive chase after justice, not converting his right into wrong by his wayward autonomy in pursuing it, not seeking to reform evils and abuses by desecrating the sole legitimate fountain of reform and renovation, not vitiating worthy ends by abnormal and harmful means. The more he feels the dignity which

compasses him as a king in a nation of kings, the more true and firm will be his allegiance to the sovereignty which he shares, the more constant his obedience to the rightful authority in which he bears part.

I have termed this Roman culture, and with good reason. Until the declining days of the republic, so long as Rome retained her integrity free from foreign admixture, there is nothing more admirable than the position of the Roman citizen toward the state,—answering every call to her service, whether in war or in peace, to a subaltern place or to supreme command,—if in an exalted position, yet obeying with punctilious exactness the laws which he was bound to execute, returning to private life poorer than he left it, and resuming the charge and duty of an ordinary citizen as if the *fasces* had never been borne before him. Scholars, familiar as you are with these models, you can do your country no better service than to reproduce them. In this steadfast loyalty was the invincible power of the Roman Republic. Its might was in its law-abiding spirit. By this it grew; by this it overcame; by this it culminated. When this declined, the pillars of its strength shook in their sockets. When this decayed, Rome became a mere glorious name in history.

Hebrew, Greek, Latin, — holiness, beauty, strength,—the triad unified in Him whose kingship they inscribed over his cross. Scholars, make

them one in your aim and endeavor. They belong together in your culture ; see that they be blended in your character and your life-work. Hellenize your religion by the grace and beauty which alone can give it a shrine worthy of itself. Hebraize art, taste, and literature by that ineffaceable *corban* which shall consecrate all that you have and are to the praise of God and the good of man. Romanize piety, genius, learning, eloquence, æsthetic culture, by loyalty to your country, your conscience, and your God. Thus, as in Hebrew, Greek and Latin was written the inscription of mock-royalty over the cross,—over your lives, as the title of Him whose sole sovereignty you own, shall be written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin the name which the seer of Patmos saw on the Saviour's vesture, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

## XII.

### OUR COUNTRY'S PERILS, NEEDS, AND CLAIMS.

(1875).

*"Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children."*—PSALM xlv. 16.

THE centennial celebrations of epochs in the conflict through which our country struggled into being have recalled my attention to the history of those times and the lives of the principal actors; and I am strongly impressed with the prominent part then borne in public affairs by graduates of Harvard College. The earliest resistance to oppressive laws and arbitrary officials was, as you know, in Massachusetts; and there is not an important patriotic measure or movement on record in which our University is not represented. Some of those who were conspicuous in the opening scenes, as Joseph Warren and Josiah Quincy, were still young men, having passed directly from college into the arena of verbal strife, on which the great drama was rehearsed before the first gun was fired. Of others, their seniors, like Samuel and John Adams, we find abundant evidence that they were in their earliest manhood known for advanced opinions in the direction of liberty, and for weight and

power of character and influence. At the same time the clergy of the province, who were almost all educated here, were, with few exceptions, leaders in the cause of the people, and that with a discretion fully equal to their zeal, and with a courage and self-devotion which quickened more languid, energized colder, and sustained fainter hearts in their congregations. *Felix prole virum*, "Happy in her progeny of men worthy of the name," would have been the appropriate motto for our University in the last century.

There are some reasons why the manhood of the graduates of that day seems precocious by the standard of our time. There were then few amusements, little news, no collateral interests, tastes, or pursuits; and the college studies of that period, restricted though they were in compass and deficient in accuracy, yet were stimulating, and supplied highly concentrated food for thought and feeling. There was a decided predilection for classical reading, not to say study (which would be a misnomer); and there was an easy, uncritical faith in the freedom, civic virtue, and untarnished fame of the ancient republics, which made their literature a perpetual source of inspiration to the ardent youth of the republic yet to be born. And there was a much more potent influence at work. There is no such ripener of mind and character as impending emergency, impatience of the present, and earnest aspiration for a better future.

Have we not had experience of this power in our recent history? When the news of Fort Sumter flashed through the land, there were in these halls those who seemed to their teachers mere boys, who started at once into vigorous manhood, grew by gradations more rapid than we could trace into high places of command, sought posts of the most perilous service, won evergreen laurels,—many, alas! only to deck their graves,—while those who survived achieved for themselves a culture for which twice the term of peaceful civic life would have been inadequate. We had one with us at our last Commencement, the mere mutilated trunk of a man, whose after-dinner speech, with the fervor and fire of youth, which his maimed and suffering life had not chilled or dimmed, had a depth of prescient wisdom which would have found fit utterance from the lips of the elders in the gravest councils of the nation. Indeed, in none of her sons can our University take a more honest pride than in those who gained in war the virtues and endowments that can best adorn and fructify the era of restored peace and renewed prosperity.

If we could only view them aright, there are now for our republic emergencies, perils intense though insidious, a present to be spurned, a future to be striven for, which ought to awaken the patriotic feeling of our young men, and to urge them on to early maturity for efficient public service. I avail myself of the present as a fit opportunity to

speak of the claims of our country on her educated men. Our imminent dangers are from popular ignorance, financial folly, political corruption, and religious latitudinarianism and indifference. If I can only arouse in those of whom we to-day take leave a sense of the responsibility which rests upon them as to these sources of evil, I am sure that I shall not have spoken in vain as regards the public and even the national well-being; for, though a hundred and fifty right-minded youth seem of no account or weight among the millions of our people, there may be among them single minds and voices that shall make themselves felt and heard through the whole length and breadth of the land, as there were, a hundred years ago, individual young men fresh from our halls, but for whom certain most momentous passages of our history would have remained unwritten.

1. I named popular ignorance among our chief dangers. Our unlimited freedom of suffrage—in theory plausible, if not fitting, and whether right or wrong, irreversible—is safe only with an intelligent people, and is fraught with peril if the voters know not what they do. The early settlements on every part of our soil, with hardly an exception, were made for causes that implied not inferior, but even superior intelligence on the part of the immigrants, who were drawn or driven hither, not by poverty and by the pressure of a population outgrowing the supply of its needs, but by politi-

cal or religious dissent, persecution, or ambition. In their posterity, intelligence and the aptitude for it were a tradition and an inheritance,—not, as has sometimes been said, created and sustained by the common-school system, but originating, energizing, and supplementing that system, which else would either have never come into being, or have died early of inanition. The posterity of those colonists is now nearly equalled, if not outnumbered, by the descendants of exiles forced from their native homes by poverty, and of captives sold into slavery, who had no culture to transmit, and whose homes can have furnished only the most scanty educational inducements and helps. The common schools accomplished for the majority of their pupils, in an earlier generation, very much more than they can do now. They taught fewer things, indeed, but the few more thoroughly: not that schools or teachers were better, but they had more receptive pupils,—for the most part children from families where there was, if not extended knowledge, mental activity,—where, if there were not many books, there was at least the English Bible, which every child was trained, expected, nay, required to read, and which (to say nothing of its religious uses) expanded and deepened the thought of its readers, gave them a rich vocabulary to think with, checked the growth of provincialisms and vulgarisms in diction, and imparted a higher, purer tone to common intercourse and daily life.



But the system, which seemed so efficient when buttressed and subsidized by home-influences, is inadequate to its assigned work for the children of the unprivileged, even here in New England, much more so in the southern and southwestern sections of the country; yet it might be made adequate without any added expenditure of time or money. When, nearly forty years ago, the public schools were thought to have fallen behind the demands of the age, a reform-movement was started, and a new spirit was infused into the whole system, mainly through the labors of Horace Mann. That spirit has been so materialized and solidified into soulless formalisms, organisms, routines, and repetitions, that, were he to reappear among us, he would recognize but little of what is still called his work. More red tape is now used in many single schools than would have sufficed for the whole State half a century ago. By a Mezentian classification, the children that are capable of progress are kept at the snail's pace of their dull and immobile schoolmates, and the slowest of the flock mark time for all the rest. Meanwhile, public munificence wastes in costly structures, that are hardly built before some fresh prevailing fancy requires that they be remodelled, the funds which, expended in brain power, might perform efficient service. A large proportion of the pupils leave school without having even learned to read with sufficient ease for the art to be of any practi-

cal benefit. They have, indeed, by dint of wearisome and useless reperusal memorized a few fragments of prose and verse, generally of second or third rate literary merit, but have not acquired the ability to read understandingly a common newspaper paragraph. The fault lies not with the teachers, who perform their appointed routine-work with fidelity and zeal, many of them with amazing skill; but the very best of them, under the requirements of a lifeless, obsolete, yet imperatively exacting system, are cramped as David was when he put on Saul's armor to go into battle with the Philistine giant.

Our schools, to do their work, must be emancipated from dead prescription and Procrustean methods and standards; they must be officered throughout by teachers who are enamoured of their profession and who magnify their calling; and those teachers must be left free to do the very best that is in them for children of all types and grades of capacity, disposition, and home-training. This is an interest which craves the attention and effort of our educated men, and especially of the young men of high culture, who are soon to fill foremost places of trust and influence in the community, and to whom we are to look for reform and renovation. Many of you will occupy positions in which you will be called to bear part in the charge and oversight of public education; and there is no service that you can render which

will be more fruitful of benefit than the endeavor to make our schools the nurseries of citizens worthy of their trust,—the seats of a culture thorough in its rudiments, stimulating in its processes, direct in its aims, definite in its results, and such as shall impart the desire and capacity for a prolonged self-culture. If there be among you one who shall have the genius and ability so to demonstrate the defects of our present system, and so to point out the better way, that he can gain the public ear and act on the general mind, he can do no nobler work, and win no higher praise.

2. Second on the list of our imminent perils I named financial folly. Whether it was necessary for us in the late war to set aside our fixed standard of value, is perhaps an open question, though to me it does not seem so. But to remain without such a standard, and to take no measures for its restoration, is at once foolish and atrociously criminal. It incapacitates us for knowing our actual condition, and the fact and rate of our progress or decline in national wealth; it leads to individual extravagance, by exaggerating the nominal and reputed value of property and income; it encourages overtrading and rash adventure, by the frequent fluctuation of our irredeemable currency; it adds to every extended commercial operation that element of pure hazard, which constitutes the difference between legitimate speculation founded on calculating foresight, and gambling, which trusts to incalcu-

lable chance ; it thus compels many of our merchants to be gamblers against their will, and vitiates the moral natures of the rest with the foul passions that preside over the orgies of the roulette-table ; it generates the state of mind, and nourishes the habits of thought and life, which induce embezzlements, peculations, forgeries, and the whole dark brood of pecuniary crimes ; and the fearful multiplication of these crimes within the last few years is chargeable much more to our financial condition than to all other demoralizing influences combined. I think myself authorized in saying this, by the admitted fact that more than half a century ago pecuniary crimes of all kinds grew with an appalling rapidity in Great Britain during a like condition of the currency, and became again infrequent when the metallic standard of value was restored.

Our present financial *régime* is sustained in part by the preponderant influence of the debtor class, always far outnumbering the creditor class, and always ready to advocate the policy which will enable them to pay or compound their dues at the lowest rate. But it could not retain its hold, were it not for the lamentable ignorance of a large part of those who are intrusted with the management of our public affairs. We have been doomed, over and over again, to see the first principles of financial science not denied, not disputed, but quietly ignored by our political leaders. Men

have undertaken the management of our national treasury, who have shown no knowledge of even the existence of such a science as political economy. Therefore is it that I name our financial interests as among the responsibilities of our educated men. You, my friends, have learned better things. You have been made conversant in the lecture-room with the principles that have been so shamelessly violated in our public policy. Sooner than you think, you will fill places in which your opinions and influence will have an appreciable weight. Our present system, or abnegation of system, may continue long enough for you to take part in the inauguration of a sounder policy. If not so, subsequent crises may claim the preventive energy of those who can understand the true financial interests of the community. There is no part of your culture here that better deserves to be cherished, expanded, and utilized in your future life as citizens, as office-bearers, as men of standing and influence, than that which relates to the principles and laws that underlie commerce, trade, and currency. They have a bearing upon the moral well-being of the people fully equal to that which concerns their material prosperity. They demand for their conservation and their practical working the highest intelligence, no less than the integrity and patriotism of those who would do the good service which the country will demand of you, as you become what you are

trained, and I trust, destined to be, leaders in opinion and action,—reformers, or rather rebuilders in the fabric of the body politic.

3. Political corruption is another of our dominant evils and imminent perils. Unscrupulous ambition, cupidity, and venality have attained a most portentous magnitude. Entire departments of our government seem to be administered with hardly an incidental reference to the service of the people, certainly with the prime intent to buttress party, to reward adherents, and to appropriate public funds for private emolument. The integrity of the suffrage is constantly assailed; elections are secured by bribery; offices are openly bought and sold; and every political triumph is succeeded, or oftener preceded and effected, by a scramble for its spoils. Instead of a government by the people, we are threatened—if the threat be not already fulfilled—with an oligarchy of demagogues, from which a decent constitutional monarchy would be a welcome relief and refuge.

You are, all of you, as I suppose, already citizens; and I would have you possessed of a profound sense of the sacredness of the trust and obligation incumbent on the citizen, the co-sovereign, of a free people. It is a kingly office and function; preserve it then in all its purity and dignity. Your every vote is an exertion of your moral agency for good or for evil. You assume responsibility for the man whom you help choose,

for the measure which you help carry. Your accountability is the same as if you yourself chose the man, or enacted the measure. Dare, then, to dissent where you cannot approve. It is because honest citizens forbear to let their protest be heard, or to register it by their ballots, that corrupt men gain the ascendancy, and evil counsels prevail. There are among the less informed many who would gladly follow the intelligent leading of upright and public-spirited citizens. Follow they will at all events, and they ought never to lack leaders worthy of their confidence.

As regards public office, many cultivated and high-minded men greatly err by refusing it, when they might obtain it without unworthy concessions, and hold it for the welfare of the community. I would have you prospectively look upon public charges as positions, not of emolument or ambition, but of service, to be rendered, if need be, with the sacrifice of personal aims for the general good. I would have you, in the future, shrink from no trust which you are adequate to discharge, and assume none which you cannot consciously occupy as a post of duty. The country, whose protection you share, whose honor or shame is yours, whose glory should be your ambition, whose prosperity you should regard as identical with your own, has indefeasible claims on your conscientious fidelity, whether in a private or a public station, whether in the wary and judicious exercise of the right of

•

suffrage, in your voice and influence in behalf of the true and the good, or in your performance of whatever functions of whatever grade may be devolved upon you. It was said not long ago of one of our best and foremost men, that he would not lift his finger to evade the meanest or to win the highest office in the nation's gift; and that, in either, his only question would be, not how the place ranked or what revenue it yielded, but how much of sincere and thorough work he could put into it. Such a man is the true citizen of a republic; such were the men whose names have been preserved for us from the earliest time in unfading honor; such are the men whom our seminaries of liberal culture should train for the service of the state.

*Loyalty* is a term which has been too exclusively employed in connection with kingship, and in our history *loyalist* and *royalist* have been generally treated as synonymes. They are very far from being synonymes. There is a heaven-wide difference between devotion to a sovereign who may be a usurper or a tyrant, and firm allegiance to impersonal, or rather multi-personal, sacred, venerable, eternal law. The true loyalists of our Revolutionary epoch were the men who armed themselves against the oppression, which was galling mainly because it was in defiance of fundamental law and constitutional right. Such loyalty is now our nation's need, in antagonism to mal-ad-



ministration and usurpation, to the abuse of trust and the invasion of right, to bribery, corruption, and favoritism. As loyal citizens of the republic, you can have no better models, no more worthy examples, than those who a century ago did honor to their nurture here by services and sacrifices that won for them imperishable renown. Be it your care that equally honored names shall appear on your list in the Catalogue, a century hence.

4. I should suppress my most profound conviction, did I not number religious latitudinarianism and indifference among the imminent perils of our time. A century ago, there was free-thinking, loose thinking, infidelity in our land; and there are well known names of that period, which have been transmitted with the very reverse of the odor of sancity. The undoubted services of Thomas Paine, and the merited popularity and efficiency of his political writings, hold a prominent place in our history; though his scurrilous and profane assaults on Christianity did not appear till several years after the close of the war, his opinions were proclaimed much earlier, and were shared by some of the foremost men in our Revolutionary crisis; and iconoclastic, destructive work, though in the cause of truth and righteousness, nay, of religion and piety, always enlists among its zealous coadjutors those who are mere destructives and nihilists. On the other hand, there is at the present moment among religious people a higher type of piety, a

more intelligent, and therefore a more steadfast faith, a more energetic propagandism, than existed a hundred years ago ; and if men would only own the kindred of spirit which remains intact in and through wide divergencies of creed and form, it would be seen that there never was a stronger array than now of those who are ready, without compromise, doubt, or qualification, to take their stand in life and death, and to identify themselves for time and eternity, with Christ and his Gospel.

But, a century ago, the vast majority of families and of men and women in our land, especially in New England, believed in the Christian revelation as of divine origin and authority, accepted its moral laws as of binding validity, and conscientiously did and refrained from doing many things solely from a sense of religious restraint and obligation. There was, indeed, a transition-period, when human law and authority were feeble, doubtful, and vacillating, during which our people were saved from anarchy mainly by a surviving, though declining, loyalty to the rigid theocratic discipline of their founders and fathers. This has all passed away. The sense of spiritual and divine realities has ceased to pervade the mass of our people, and seems utterly wanting in the greater number of those by whom it is not distinctly and emphatically recognized. In many circles, indifference to all religious subjects and interests is regarded as the normal state ; and utter unbelief, nay, blank

atheism, or some euphemistic *alias* for it, is not considered even as regrettable, or as impairing the soundness of one's judgment or the safety of his influence. Much of our current literature deals irreverently and flippantly with the objects of Christian faith; and not a little of our popular poetry is utterly heathenish. Religion as a life-power—never stronger than now in individual hearts—is no longer, as formerly, a shaping and controlling force in society and government. But no government has yet lived, no society has yet prospered, without it. Nowhere in human history has the experiment been thoroughly and persistently tried but in France; and she, after her baptism in the bloodbath of infidelity, was only too happy to rebuild her shattered altars, to recall her banished priesthood, and to adopt the Church as an ally of the State.

Above all, in a free country, where no man or body of men can claim superior reverence, where in its human aspects law has no higher source or sanction than the mind and will of the people, is there intense need that there be a public and general recognition of its source beside the throne of God, and its sanction in his eternal justice and retributive providence. He who fears not God will cease to regard man; and wanton, law-despising autonomy is the natural and inevitable outgrowth and expression of religious unbelief.

While an ambiguous, undefined position as to

religion, an indifference tantamount to denial, can be at the present moment affirmed of large numbers of persons of (so-called) liberal culture, it is a position unworthy of them, even pre-eminently. For absolute unbelief, if it be reached by inquiry and reasoning, I blame no one. But I do regard him as intensely blameworthy, who of his own choice remains indifferent and undecided,—who treats the whole subject as one of those inferior interests from which it is the part of a wise man to keep aloof. Be it true or false, religion, Christianity, has a paramount claim above all things else on inquiry, decision, and corresponding action. It is either God's best gift, or man's most sorry and despicable delusion; and he who cannot be for it ought to be with his whole heart and soul against it.

I fear not for you, my friends, any results from the faithful study of Christianity, its records, proofs, and claims. But I do deprecate your indifference to it, in part because the community needs the strength which such as you can give to the cause of Christian truth, yet still more, for your own sakes. You are to build for yourselves character, reputation, influence; and I know that Christian faith and piety are the only foundation on which you can build with assured safety. Structures outwardly as fair and as strong as any of you can hope to rear have, in the sight of those who have gone before you, been swept away by the onrush of sudden temptation, or have collapsed because the

sand on which they stood has been washed from under them. The time will come when, if you build on any other foundation than the living, eternal Rock, you will know and own that it was the one fatal and irretrievable mistake and calamity of your life. You are capable of determining for yourselves whether I speak the truth. To know whether it is the truth, is of so unutterable moment to you that no subject ought to lie closer in your regard. Not one of you ought to go forth into active life indifferent to religion. Not one of you should fail to be either an earnest friend, advocate, exemplar of Christianity, or its avowed and open enemy. Were you to go hence determined, each of you, to choose his position with conscientious wariness, and then to take his stand frankly, honestly, manfully, I feel persuaded that there would be among you but one heart and voice, one aim and purpose,—that of loyal devotion and lifelong service to God in Christ.

My friends, though I may seem from year to year to repeat the same formulary of greetings and good wishes, I can assure you that the old words come to my lips with an always new and ever profounder feeling. Years only strengthen the affections and deepen the sympathies; and every new wave of the life-tide that flows from our inlet into the great sea carries with it more and more of my loving remembrance, dear appreciation, and fond

hope. I wish that those who go from us knew how much joy they give here by their success and honor. Believe me, my friends, that nothing that concerns you can be indifferent to us; and take with you from each and all of your teachers a hearty god-speed on your several careers. May our Father's loving Providence and guiding Spirit be ever over you and with you. May your powers and attainments be so consecrated to the service of your age, your country, and your God, that the approval of good men and the blessing of Heaven may be with you through your earthly pilgrimage, and that by your fidelity here you may be trained for the higher trusts and nobler stewardships of the life eternal.

### XIII.

## THOUGHT, FEELING, AND ACTION.

(1876.)

“While I was musing, the fire burned; then spake I with my tongue.”—PSALMS XXXIX. 3.

FIRST, thought (“while I was musing”); then feeling (“the fire burned”); then speech or action (“then spake I with my tongue”),—such is undoubtedly, in the last analysis, the natural and necessary order. Action (and speech is action) implies antecedent feeling; and feeling implies antecedent thought. But the habit of our time is to reverse this process, as nearly as the nature of the mind will permit; so that, in unnumbered instances, we have, first, speech or action from sudden impulse, then the feeling which it either engenders or intensifies, and, last, if at all, reflection. The consequence of this reversed order is, that sayings and doings, at their very best, have much less in them, mean less, carry less weight, exert less influence, than they ought. They may, indeed, fill a larger space,—words certainly do: it always takes a longer time to give a shallow, hazy exposition of a subject than to do it

justice; and the length of a speech often bears an inverse proportion to its solid contents.

It has seemed to me that I could render no better service to you, my friends, who are leaving us for new departments of active duty, or of study with an ultimate view to your life-work, than to illustrate the prime importance of deliberate thought and profound feeling as the sole basis for worth and efficiency in word and deed.

I cannot but think, as I have intimated, that our time is characterized by the crowding-out of thought; and this, in great part, by the vast increase of the food for thought,—in part, also, by the multiplication of occasions and opportunities for speech and action. The avenues to the soul are so thronged as to leave it no privacy. Nehemiah, by far the most able, resolute, and efficient personage in the Hebrew annals, gives us the secret of his power when he writes, "Then I consulted with myself." Self is, with many, the last counsellor resorted to. Is any course of action to be determined upon? They have recourse to an outside conscience. They go into the street, or into the public assembly, and cry, "Men and brethren, what shall I do?" instead of communing with their own souls; which, if there be a love of the true and the right, is the same thing as communing with the ever and most intimately present God.

We see tokens of this superficiality in every de-



partment of life. In science, it shows itself in sweeping generalizations, which ignore the larger part of the facts they ought to embrace ; in literature, in audacious and glittering rhetoric, adapted, not to convey thought, but to cover up the lack of thought ; in poetry, in images which have not time to shape themselves before they are put into numbers, present only shadowy and indefinite outlines of the grand and the beautiful, and are often most prized for an obscurity which baffles the reader's understanding, and gives the writer credit for depth where there is only muddiness. In political action, how few are willing to assume the labor requisite to understand the momentous interests in which they display the most pertinacious partisanship ! In private life, a very large part of the errors and crimes committed by men in positions of trust—the betrayals of confidence, the frauds, peculations, embezzlements, which occur with such alarming frequency—are due, not to any initial purpose of wrong, but to the absence of that wariness, that circumspection, which in earlier times was the safeguard and nurse of principle and character.

The subject before us appertains to the philosophy of moral action ; and I will ask you to examine with me the genesis of word and deed. Our wills are free, if we can give credence to our own consciences, which certainly treat us as if we could in every instance have done otherwise ; approving

or blaming us, instead of congratulating or pitying us, as they would if we were acted upon by irresistible forces from without. Yet are we really free? How numerous are our utterances and acts, which at the moment could not have been otherwise! How often are we compelled to speak and act, when it is literally true, as we say, that we have no time to think! I have been engaged, I will suppose, in an exciting conversation. The subject was not of my own choice; and my words were suggested, shaped, virtually forced from me, by the words of others. Being the man I am, I could not have spoken differently. What I said was the true expression of my conviction and feeling. From the abundance of the heart the mouth spake. Yet, as I review the conversation, I have not the consciousness of an automaton. If I have spoken soberly and kindly, I approve myself; if with levity or severity, I blame myself. Yes, I literally approve or blame myself,—not my words, which could not have been other than they were, but the self, which, I am well aware, might have been, by my own voluntary agency, a worse self or a better self; and thus might have spoken on that occasion more frivolously or harshly, more seriously or mercifully. So, too, I may have just performed an act, right or wrong, beneficent or cruel, self-restraining or self-indulgent. The occasion, the opportunity, came upon me unawares. I had no time to deliberate. I could not but act

myself on the impulse of the moment. It was out of my power at that instant to act otherwise than in accordance with my tone of feeling and cast of character. Yet, when I reflect upon it, I know that I was worthy of approval or censure,—I, not the act, but the self, that might have been, in some way, through the exercise of my own free will, a very different self.

But what can I do for myself? I may, if I choose, do nothing. Conscious of the power of freedom, I may decline to use that power, and may thus abdicate my freedom. I may so abandon myself wholly to outside influences, that the associations and inducements of various kinds that befall, surround, beset me, are not only the occasions, but the shaping causes, of my speech and action. Am I, then, free? Is my soul my own, or have I lost it? The question answers itself. I am not in any sense free. Yet I know that I might have been free, and that I chose rather not to be so. As, under certain ancient codes, a man born free could sell himself into perpetual slavery, so may one, by his own willing self-surrender, make himself a life-long slave to outside influences.

Where, then, lies our freedom, or the possibility of it? It lies in our power of attention, in our command of thought, in the control which we can establish over the realm within, whence inevitably flow our words and deeds. The whole philosophy of moral action is comprised in those familiar

words, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." It is when we seem the least active, that we are in truth the most active. It is when we say and do nothing, that we determine what we shall say or do. It is in our retired and quiet hours, that we are the most busy for good or for evil. It is then that the spirits come and go at our bidding. Those that we then make welcome stay with us when we lose the clear consciousness of their presence, and prompt us without our knowing whence the impulse comes. Those that we then exclude keep aloof from us, and bear no part in the ordering of our lives.

You, my friend, I will suppose, are accustomed to meditate on your being and your destiny, on your relations to God and man, on the vast responsibility of life, on its opportunities for improvement and usefulness, on the momentous and eternal interests depending upon it. Your days neither rise nor close without the appeal to the Divine guidance, the self-commitment to the Divine benediction. It is thus that you have willed to live. You are fully aware that you might have lived far otherwise. You have often put forth strong effort to exclude thoughts of a lower, perhaps of an opposite, type; to recall wandering thoughts; to keep your mind intent on great, high, sacred themes. The process has been precisely that described in our text: "While I was musing the fire burned." Patient thought has generated profound feeling. Your emotional

life has taken its character and tone from the beliefs, convictions, principles, which have been pondered and revolved in your meditative hours. Thus far, and no farther, does your freedom extend ; but, in extending thus far, it covers the whole field of your active life, and embraces all that you say or do. You are in society, and immersed in the current of rapid conversation. The subject may not be of your own choice ; but your words are not determined by the complexion of the current. They take the coloring of your beliefs and principles, desires and affections. They flow with the current, if it be true, reverent, kind ; they cross and stem it, if it be false, undevout, malevolent. An occasion comes on which you must either act, or—what is, as regards the will, equally an act—refuse to do what the occasion prompts. If it be an opportunity for a right or beneficent act, you spontaneously avail yourself of it ; if it be a temptation to any form of wrong or evil, you as spontaneously spurn it.

But your retired and quiet hours may be passed very differently. You may give free scope to harmful reveries, to imaginings that transgress the borders of purity and integrity, to longings inconsistent with faithful service in your sphere of duty. You may take a coarse pleasure in welcoming thoughts which you imagine you can never be sufficiently depraved to actualize. These reveries give birth to desires and affections of their own

type ; these musings light and fan a fire of their own baleful hue ; and by your inward life thus ordered your social and active life is determined. You are constantly saying and doing things which you do not approve, which you did not intend beforehand, did not deliberately choose or plan. You excuse yourself to others, perhaps even to your own soul, on the ground of suddenness and inadvertency. You say with sincerity, and with some degree of truth, "Had I only had time to reflect, I would have spoken or acted otherwise." But in nine cases out of ten you cannot have time to reflect. You must speak or act at the moment, or not at all ; and it is these inadvertent words and deeds that are the true index of the character, of the selfhood. In them you are yielding to a necessity of your own choice,—to a necessity which is the offspring of your own freedom. We have the record of some of St. Paul's inadvertent words ; and they were those of burning zeal for human salvation. We have some traditions of St. John's inadvertent acts, when he was an old man at Ephesus ; and they were spontaneous ministries of love for his Master's flock. We have known persons who have been frequently surprised into acts of signal beneficence ; others, from whom occasions that might have seemed adapted to give offence and excite anger have only elicited unpremeditated utterances of forbearance, forgiveness, charity. The fearless knight who sleeps in his armor is awakened by a midnight alarm, not

to dastardly surrender, but to brave resistance. The true soldier in the great battle of life sleeps only in his armor; and the sudden call is a summons, not to yield passively to the powers of evil, but to come off from the conflict more than conqueror.

If these things be so, they attach prime importance to those portions of our lives which with many of us are accounted of the least importance. They make preparation for duty the essential element of duty. This is taught us by that sacred example to which we can never look without profit. Our Saviour's active ministry occupied but a very small portion of his life. What mean those silent years in Nazareth? What mean those forty days in the wilderness, at the outset of his Messianic career? What mean those lone nights of prayer on the mountain? What, but preparation adequate to the world-wide and world-enduring mission that lay before him?

For us, the quality of our lives must depend on the mass of soul, on the quantity of character; and this must grow, not from what we say and do, but from what we think and feel. This truth is strikingly expressed by Cicero, who writes: "A strong and great mind consists in two things. One is a superiority to circumstances, in the conviction that a man ought neither to admire, choose, nor seek aught that is not right and becoming; and should succumb neither to example, nor to mental

perturbation, nor to fortune. The other is, that, with a mind thus prepared, he should undertake the conduct of great, especially of useful, affairs, not shrinking from arduous labor or from peril. The glory lies in the latter, as does the usefulness also ; but the reason, the efficient cause, is in the former."

So far as we have the lives of the most useful men made known to us, they have corresponded with this description of the great moralist. These men have had a secret, inward life of their own, nourished by contemplation and prayer, fed by the dews of heavenly grace. They have subdued and trained their own spirits, before they have obtained power over their fellow-men. Their active lives have been but the counterpart of the hidden life with God. Indeed, some of these great lives have been as remarkable for the length and frequency of their breathing-spells—seasons without any outside work—as for the intense and cogent energy of their more active portions. Hardly any man of his age did so much, in so many ways, and so well, as Dr. Chalmers ; yet his biography is full of vacations,—times, evidently, when he was recruiting brain-power and soul-power ; drawing in fresh vigor from communion with God, to start anew with an energy born not of flesh or of the will of man, but of the might of the Divine Spirit.

We need to be constantly reminded that the efficiency of our life-work depends not on its quan-



tity, but on its quality. If we are shallow and superficial in thought and feeling, no matter how abundant we are in activity, we but labor in vain, and spend our strength for nought. The river, whose unresting flow is an industrial force for a score of thriving towns and cities on its margin, is sustained in its speed and power by snows and rains that fall on mountains hardly accessible to the foot of man; and, let these fail, the mill-wheel rests, the shuttles and spindles lie still, and want replaces industry in the streets. Equally man's most fruitful industry of mind and soul flows from unseen sources in the delectable mountains of holy musing, rapt devotion, praise, love, and charity; and, if these languish and dry up, the soul-work becomes mere vapid hand-work or tongue-work, and this soon lapses into lassitude and indifference.

Now, the tendency of our time is to merge preparation in action. We must hear and read and learn and do so much, that we have no time to think or feel. The telegraph keeps us conversant with the daily events, rumors, speculations, of the whole civilized world. Competition demands constant alertness and effort. Our place in life can be maintained only by incessant labor. We are driven in all our work. Hence the lack of depth, thoroughness, completeness, in literature, in philosophy, in statecraft, in handicraft, and, above all, in the discharge of our daily duty. The one prime need is

preparation for our work, whatever it be. If it be intellectual labor, let careful and profound thought—our own and not another's thought, or; if another's, made ours by assimilation and reproduction—precede and accompany whatever we undertake. If it be the labor of a profession, let us be not mere routine-workers, but master-workmen, conversant with the scope, meaning, and bearing of whatever we do; and with an inward life not merged in the outward, but above it, embracing it while independent of it. If we essay to serve the State, by word or pen, in place or office, let us beware how we handle affairs that we do not comprehend; and deem silence and neutrality the only honorable, the only honest part, where we must else speak without knowing, and act as mere puppets pulled by powers behind the scenes. And as to the work that concerns us all equally, the discharge of our whole duty as moral beings, self-ward, man-ward, God-ward, let us, first and chief of all, establish and confirm those convictions that underlie all duty.

The prime object of thought is to fix our beliefs as to fundamental truth. A great deal of the moral feebleness, and, if I may use a somewhat coarse word for which I can find no synonym, of the moral flabbiness, of our time is the necessary and logical consequence of the position which so many profess to hold as to fundamental beliefs. It is often deemed unworthy of a strong, active, enter-

prising mind to have any settled convictions, any closed questions. Every new utterance of scepticism not only demands fresh inquiry, which is not to be blamed if there be time for it, but throws the mind back into vague doubt, and resolves beliefs that had begun to take shape into a formless chaos. I know men as old as I am, who have repeatedly worked their way almost to a settled belief in God and Christ and his Gospel, who, had the press lain still, would have had thirty or forty years of assured and comforting faith; but whom every book or name that starts a fresh cosmogony or theory of religion plunges anew into a sea of doubt, so that they can never be said, for six consecutive months, to believe in God, or in their own souls, or in the reality of any objective truth. Now, I would not have the mind inexorably inhospitable; for, by keeping its doors open, it often "entertains angels unawares." But there is a heaven-wide difference between a hospitable home and a wayside inn, with a welcome for every tramp; and, where tramps resort, angels love not to enter. It is in our power so to consider the fundamental questions on which duty, obligation, the whole moral life, depends, that we shall reach satisfactory conclusions concerning them; and, such conclusions once reached, we have a right to regard them as settled against mere suggested or reported doubts, and unless or until we are driven from them by unanswerable argument.

But one chief reason of this fluctuation of belief is suggested by our text. We do not muse long enough for the fire to burn. Our beliefs lie loose, because we have not pondered them sufficiently to feel them. In travelling many years ago on Cape Cod, I saw whole leagues of coast on which the sand was driven before every breeze, and blown into fantastic mounds and hollows that took ever new shape under the passing eye. But in other places grass had been sown, and its fibrous roots had fastened the unstable soil, and converted the shifting sand into solid earth. Beliefs without feeling are like those wind-swept beaches; and never so much like them as now, when, on the side of scepticism, breeze succeeds breeze with hardly a moment's intermission. But the emotions strike down their rootlets among the beliefs, coil their filaments around them, hold them when the wind sweeps over them, give them an increasing stability till they become immovable as the truths which they embody, and thus make of them a foundation on which the life-fabric may be built sure, firm and strong.

My friends of the Graduating Class, permit me to urge upon you the momentous importance of fixed beliefs. I would by no means have you close your minds to the results, or even the conjectures or postulates, of advancing science. There is always a strong probability that the seeming advance is real, that the leaders of opinion are

moving in the right direction. But no scientific progress can disturb the evidence of those fundamental truths, in which are involved the being and the well-being of the human soul. As to the existence and providence of God, the question is not that of rival cosmogonies, or of the natural history of man or of organized being, but the same question that has been before the mind ever since it began to philosophize,—Can chaos have become cosmos without a shaping will, an organizing purpose, a co-ordinating intelligence? Does autonomy reside in brute matter; or, rather, does not every accession of plastic power attributed to matter postulate the more imperatively the agency of Sovereign, Infinite Mind? Thus, also, the validity and authority of the Christian religion depend not on any alleged accordance or discrepancy of its records with science, as to which it is absurd to expect of them any advance upon the opinions of their birthtime; for conformity with these opinions alone could have made them intelligible to those for whom they were first written, and scientific teaching is obviously beyond the legitimate scope of Divine revelation. Nor yet does Christianity depend for its truth on the literal authenticity of its canonical books, though I believe that the investigations started by modern scepticism have tended not to disprove, but to confirm their authenticity. Christianity may safely rest on its own evidence,—on its intrinsic worth; on its verification in human history and experi-

ence; on the characters it has formed; on the work it has wrought; on its identity with all that is noblest, purest, most precious in humanity; on its converting, sanctifying, energizing influence, wherever it has enshrined itself in the individual heart, given tone to society, moulded institutions, manners, and customs, become a factor in the life of communities and nations.

But it is of little consequence that you give a mere assent to the truths of religion,—an assent that of itself may be too superficial to withstand doubt, cavil, or even ridicule. God and Christ, if they have any claims, claim your reverence and love. Your thought on these momentous themes has its only legitimate issue in feeling, and cannot be patient, habitual, profound, without lifting your souls in worship, and bringing you to the Saviour's feet as his learners and followers.

With thought and feeling thus ordered, you are prepared for your life-work, God grant you all this preparation, that you may render loyal service in your time; that every hopeful omen of this hour may be more than verified; and that on your path may rest no shadows, but only growing, culminating light! May God's loving Providence and guiding Spirit be over and with you in all your way; and while, after your separation, you can never meet in unbroken numbers in this world, may not one be wanting in the glad society in which the faithful on earth shall be the redeemed in heaven!

## XIV.

### HABIT.

(1877.)

“When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.”—JOHN xxi. 18.

THIS, the evangelist adds, was said to signify by what death Peter should glorify God. It might equally be said to each of us, to signify by what life we shall glorify or dishonor Him. For Peter the prediction was fulfilled, when he was made ready by no gentle hands for the death which Christ had died. For us it is verified, for good or evil, in the power of habit, which covers and controls an ever larger portion of our lives as we advance in years; so that there are more and more things predetermined for us and forced upon us by an *alter ego*,—another self,—which perhaps has become obsolete as regards our present consciousness, yet is no less potent, nay, even more potent over our words and deeds, than when it was the self of consciousness.

This is an inevitable experience, and it is essential to our highest excellence and usefulness;

yet, like all laws of our moral being, it may work in opposite directions, and may do us as much harm as it can do us good. It is the essence of habit that its individual acts are either spontaneous, or repeated with so slight a stress of volition as to demand little or no effort for their performance. Without the tendency to form habits, I know not how there could be any improvement, any growth of mind or character. If it remained as difficult to do the work belonging to our several conditions in life as it was at the outset, we should never have time for any thing more, higher, or better. If it were as hard to practise virtues as it is to acquire them, our moral characters would remain stationary. But habit, by making our stated work easy, releases brain-power for improvement within its scope or beyond it; and by making the exercise of the moral qualities we have acquired spontaneous, it releases soul-power for moral progress in the same or other directions. Thus the diligent worker, and he who aspires toward a high standard of moral excellence, are constantly forming new habits, while rejoicing in the benign sway of those already formed.

But though this be true in detail in every period of life, habit has certain general relations to its several periods. Youth voluntarily forms habits; riper age is governed by them. The young man girds himself, and goes whither he will; the man in the prime, and still more in the decline, of



life is girded by habit, and carried, if not where he would not, at least where he cannot help being carried. Habit is a subject in youth; in after years, an absolute monarch,—it may be, a beneficent sovereign; it may be, a hateful and loathsome despot. In early life the frequent change of condition—from school to school with altered surroundings and influences, from school to college, and so on, till the profession or mode of life is determined—breaks the continuity of habit, delays the formation of fixed habits, and often arrests bad habits that would otherwise have become fixed. In after life essential changes are infrequent, and habit becomes indurated, verifying a significant saying of one of the Hebrew prophets: “He hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel; therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed.”

You, my friends of the graduating class, are approaching this period; some of you, probably, have reached it. Life will be more continuous than it has been; and it has seemed to me that I could not select for my parting address to you a more appropriate subject than the lifelong habits which you most need to form, or, if formed, to retain and cherish,—the habits on which your success and permanent well-being must be contingent.

1. Foremost among these essential habits I would

place that of doing thoroughly whatever you do. Under our present college system, it must be admitted that there are strong temptations to less than thorough work. All parts of your required, and even of your chosen, course have not been of equal interest to you. Much of it has not had in your own minds the importance which you will hereafter recognize. There have been many engrossing interests aside from your curriculum,—college societies, athletic sports, social engagements, the busy life of the outside world. The minimum required, nay, even considerably more, has been attainable by somewhat superficial study, and the work of the more diligent has been largely available for the less diligent. You have labored under the disadvantage—necessary, so far as I can see, yet none the less to be regretted—of not having had definite ends, connected with your future mode of life, present to your consciousness in each of the departments of study, which from the very nature of the case have been determined for you, not by you. From this time forth you will be in the main self-dependent as to subjects and methods of study, and as to the distribution of time and the relative importance to be assigned to various pursuits and employments. Most of you will enter at once, either on callings which you will pursue on your own account, or on studies that in all their parts have an immediate bearing on your chosen professions. Thorough work in these careers will be

fully as much your interest as your duty. Sham work will be detected, or will come to nought. Superficial work will not retain its polished surface ; but, like bad veneering, will be chipped away, and betray the worthless material beneath.

Some of you will engage in business other than literary or professional. Let me beg you to undertake nothing which you do not understand as fully as you have the means of understanding it. Make yourselves, as rapidly and as completely as possible, masters of the business in which you engage, commencing—if you can—at the beginning, and passing up by successive grades. Graduates of this college have repeatedly gone hence into machine-shops, or factories, or inferior clerkships, and have thus become practically conversant with the most laborious elementary details of their intended life-work ; and I have never known an instance of this kind, in which the method has not been justified by sure and rapid progress ; while there have not been wanting cases of an opposite kind, in which those who imagined that their college training gave them brevet rank in some secular calling have failed to maintain it, and have been compelled with shame to take a lower place.

Some of you will be teachers ; and I might tell you that those who are many years your seniors would not dare to remain teachers, did they cease to be learners. I would have you never presume to teach any thing merely because you once

learned it; but only after so reviewing it that you have at the present time a clear and full understanding of it. Nothing can be more fugacious than the rudiments of the very branches in which you think you excel. They are almost always less at the command even of a good scholar when he leaves than when he enters college; and the greatest benefit that can be derived from a year or two spent in teaching is the fixing of these rudiments in the memory, so that they are never lost afterward. If teaching be your permanent profession, incessant and careful study is the only price at which you can obtain a position worthy your endeavor. If it be but a temporary vocation, still the habit of thoroughness, or the reverse, now formed, will go with you into your subsequent life to make or to mar it.

In professional, classical, or scientific study, which for many of you will occupy the next following years, concentrated application to one thing at a time is the only method that can make you scholars. Frequent change of work is attended with a waste of time in beginnings and endings, and often with no little confusion of thought and intermingling of subjects that do not belong together. In many departments, I know, some alternation in the kind of work is necessary; but where it is so, take for each subject solid portions of time; and take at a time, if it be possible, solid portions of a subject, so that there shall be

mastered within a given period an entire subdivision, branch, or topic which shall have a unity and completeness of its own,—otherwise, much of your work either will need to be repeated or will remain imperfect. Do not account as thorough study that which is narrowed within the limits of the subject in hand. There is no subject which has not conterminous subjects,—none which has not its connections with a genus of which it is a species, and with other kindred species and genera; and the more collateral study you bestow on any subject, the better do you comprehend its true place and bearings and its relative importance. For lack of this collateral study, an avowed specialist in a profession or science often shows himself inferior, even in his specialty, to those for whom it has been but one subject among many.

You will, many of you, be writers. There are two purposes for which you may write, both demanding thoroughness, though of different types. You may write to serve some temporary end, to produce an immediate impression, to instruct or persuade the public directly and transiently before you. In this case you need a firm grasp of the subject in hand, at least in its recent history and its nearest relations; and you cannot afford any thing less than pure, chaste, and perspicuous diction, accuracy of statement, and pertinence of illustration. But there is a degree of elaboration which would be superfluous in work not intended to last.

But you may,—some of you, I trust, will,—in due season, write for a public larger in both space and time. In this case thoroughness implies, on the one hand, conversance with all that has been worthily done in the department which you have undertaken, and with all accessible materials; and, on the other hand, the vigorous exercise upon it of your own powers in creating, remodelling, opening new ranges of thought, following up new routes of inquiry or speculation, making substantial additions to what others have wrought before you. Moreover, for what is meant to be permanent, mere writing *calamo currente* is utterly inadmissible. Your style must be fully on a level with your thought, and must have the graces which are born only of slow and heedful toil, diligent elaboration, and careful pruning. Of the current literature of the day, much that is both thoughtful and brilliant is evanescent simply for lack of thoroughness in the details of method and composition. Many an author long outlives his promised immortality; and not a few first editions furnish more copies for papermakers than for readers. Some years ago I saw in Omaha, for a while the capital of Nebraska, a State-house of fair material and impressive aspect, on a hill commanding the whole surrounding territory. On approaching it, I found it a ruin, though but ten years old. It had been built in such haste that even the cement would not hold, and no two

adjacent stones had kept the angle at which they were laid. The old State-house of Massachusetts, superseded for public uses more than half a century ago, still has in its massive foundation and solid walls centuries of life, if crowded travel and traffic shall not demand its premature removal. Not unapt types are these of brain-fabrics equally meant to last. How many splendid ruins of ambitious reputations, even less than ten years old, strew the literature of our time! Meanwhile, the old authors, who knew how to build, and put only thorough work into their structures, enjoy a perpetual youth and an undecaying fame.

I have made these specifications, hoping that they may give you hints of the thoroughness which I would have your life-long habit, but which can be your habit only if you form it early,—only if you start with the resolve that you will henceforth do whatever you do to the best of your ability. There are those now on the stage in every honorable career, who are incapable of doing less than their best; and there is not one of them who formed this habit midway in his course. For you it must be formed now, soon, or never; and, if it be not formed, your failures will outnumber your successes; your reputation will fall short of your ability; your service in your day and generation will be far below what God and man can rightfully claim of your opportunities and privileges.

2. Another habit which I would have you form is that of unselfishness. You are, I trust, all of you, ambitious. There are two careers open before you,—a selfish and a generous career, on either of which you may take your chances of success. You may be supremely solicitous for promotion, place, office, emolument, at whatever cost. You may acquire the habit of constant self-reference,—of endeavoring always to be foremost, not in solid attainments or merit, but in the competition for such prizes as depend on special endeavor rather than on substantial desert. Pushing, striving, supplanting, may become a fixed and inevitable habit. It is a habit which can have, in the consciousness of those who have formed it, little to commend it to such as shall come after them. If they attain their aims, they lose more in the esteem and love of those around them than they gain in position or emolument. They are often mere pariahs in the society in which they affect pre-eminence. They may have satellites, dependents, flatterers, but no friends. I might name, were they not better left unnamed, among those who were my pupils here more than forty years ago, some in whom this habit was even then fully formed, and destined to be life-long. Often shunned, never sought, so far as loving or intimate fellowship was concerned, they had already created a desert around them, which remained unpeopled as long as they lived; and I think that



with the lapse of years they painfully felt the lack and loneliness, and could they have recommenced their career, they would have been unselfish for very self's sake.

There are specially cogent reasons why your ambition should be unselfish. You are beneficiaries of the public to a pre-eminent degree. Your privileges here are in great part derived from gratuities of the dead and the living, accumulated from the day of small things when every gift represented a conscious sacrifice. There are, too, many services which only a well educated man can worthily perform, and which are sure to devolve on those who have the college stamp of liberal culture. You will be ere long called upon for such services, and they may be rightfully demanded of you on the very ground of your reputed fitness for them. Whether you render them or not will depend on early habit. There are those who, when a claim of this kind is made upon them, ask spontaneously, "How shall I evade or decline it?" There are others who ask as spontaneously, "How shall I find time and make room for it?" These self-questionings proceed, respectively, from opposite types of character,—the one, the absorption of self in self; the other, the identification of the self with its social relations and the duties that belong to them.

Now I would not have you neglect due self-culture; but I would have you regard self in all its contents, and cherish, educate, and mature the self-

hood which has common interests with neighbors, fellow-citizens, the community, country, and race, no less than that maimed and misdeveloped selfhood which ignores all but self. You will never find reason, even as regards what is commonly called self-culture, to regret the seeming sacrifices of an unselfish life. In such a life the mind may take in less from books, may evolve less from reflection; but, on the other hand, its vision is made quicker and keener, its apprehensive faculties gain a stronger grasp, its executive powers acquire a more efficient energy. Except in the mere details of scholarship, the intellect profits more by healthful activity on the varied and exacting occasions of real life, than by exclusive devotion to what are called by way of eminence intellectual pursuits. The true scholar blends and unifies the studious and the active life. Cicero certainly was inferior to none of his contemporaries, perhaps to no man of any age, in attainments and in the love of study; yet none could have been more ready than he for the service of friends and of the State. There can be no more authentic testimony than his, when he writes: "The knowledge and contemplation of nature are defective and incomplete, if not followed up by active duty. Those err, who say that the man of surpassing genius, could all his needs be supplied as by a divining-rod, would give himself up wholly to knowledge and science. He would still shun solitude, and seek society; he would want to teach

as well as to learn, to impart no less than to receive ; and the virtue which is of service for the union and defence of the community is to be preferred to that which confines itself to the pursuit of knowledge and science."

3. Above all, I would urge upon you the habit of conscientious action. By this I mean, not that of doing only what seems to you right, but that of testing your conduct in all its details by the standard of absolute right. This is by no means the universal habit of really good men. Every man, good or bad, has his habitual standard. Some men refer every question of conduct to immediate pleasure ; some, to immediate interest ; some, to ultimate self-advancement ; some, to public opinion, general custom, or the tastes of a clique or party. Of good men, some lay down rules for themselves which are at the outset or in the main coincident with the right, yet in particular cases diverge widely from it. It is very convenient, it saves time and trouble, to say, "I make it my unvarying rule ;" and in the great majority of instances the rule may justify itself in the conduct which it dictates : but unless it be a literal transcript from the nature of things, from the law of justice and love, there will occur cases in which it authorizes wrong, it may be, atrocious wrong. Especially in our conduct towards others, in our treatment of their claims upon us, in our judgment of their merits, in our action with

regard to their interests, the variables are so numerous in proportion to the constants, and so very widely diverse, that no narrower rule than the law of justice, and that, the justice which is identical with love, can be of universal application. Very often two cases that come equally under the same artificial and—in the main—wise rule are so widely unlike in their actual merits, that what is simple justice and substantial kindness in the one is in the other both unjust and unkind. The same thing is true with regard to rules more strictly personal. We can have no rule of life, unless it be literally identical with some absolute moral duty, which may not, if adhered to, sometimes place us in a false position,—in a position alien from the very principles and spirit in which the rule had birth.

Hence the necessity of keeping the standard of the absolutely true, just, and kind ever at hand for the trial of such individual questions of conduct as are perpetually offering themselves for our decision. Hence, especially, the necessity of subordinating all our other habits, before we consent to form them, to this rightfully sovereign habit of conscientious action; so that our habits shall be not derived from, but identical with the reality of things, with justice to our fellow-men, and with that unfailing kindness without which justice cannot be. To form this sovereign habit may require somewhat arduous self-discipline; but when it is once formed, its exercise is spontaneous, and the judgment under it

can seldom be otherwise than prompt and decisive. As I have said, we always tacitly refer our conduct to certain fixed standards; and it is as easy to ask and answer the questions, "Is it intrinsically fitting? Is it just? Is it kind?" as it is to ask and answer the questions, "Is it expedient? Is it gainful? Is it in accordance with the special rule which I have laid down for myself?"

These habits which I have specified,—that of thorough work in whatever you do, that of unselfish living, that of constant reference to conscience in the whole conduct of life,—include numberless minor habits, which will be tributary to them or will grow naturally from them. They are essential to your self-respect, to your rightful position in society, to your fair account before the ever open tribunal of the Supreme Judge.

My friends, you have before you a future which God has placed most largely at your own control. The great essentials of well-being await only your choice. The change of life before you invites your careful review of such habits as you have begun to form, that you may deliberately determine which of them to retain and cherish, which to repudiate. If in this respect you need a new departure, it is hardly probable that you will ever have another opportunity so favorable.

Take with you my fervent good wishes for your merited success and deserved favor with God and

man ; and may the blessing of our Father, the guidance of our Saviour, and the assurance of His redeeming love be yours in this life, and in the life to come !

## XV.

### THOROUGH LIFE-WORK.

(1878.)

“Then said Hezekiah to Isaiah, Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. He said moreover, For there shall be peace and truth in my days.”—ISAIAH XXXIX. 8.

THESE words show us a type of character to which we may well look on an occasion like this,—not for example, indeed, but for admonition, which may have at least the merit of timeliness, as addressed to those who are just entering on a new stage of being, whether of active life or of express preparation for future activity. The Jewish king from whom we have our text was a good man, but in a small way. It has been announced to him by the prophet that, though he will pass the residue of his days in tranquillity, the direst calamities will overwhelm his nation in ruin, and his own children will be captives and slaves in Babylon. His reply is not that of pious resignation to the painful will of God, but of self-congratulation that these evils which are sure to come will not come in his time.

"After me the deluge; but what care I, if the fountains of the great deep and the bottles of heaven only remain closed while I stay?" Let me ask, Has not precisely this feeling very large influence in preventing or arresting reform and improvement in society, in the State, in all the grave interests of mankind? There are quiet, respectable citizens, good men according to their own mean and narrow standard, who are always in favor of things as they are, though there be growing and threatening evils, storm-clouds in the horizon, mutterings of distant thunder, because they think the clouds will not gather or the thunder-stroke fall till after they are gone; content with a quietness which will last through their time, though they know very well that it will not last much longer. Such men are obstacles in the way of progress, hinderances to philanthropy, ciphers in the motive force of the community, as it yearns and strives for a future better than the present.

But the same disposition frequently assumes an active form. There are those who determine that, come what may, there shall, at all events, be peace in their day. Such are the men who, in public life, postpone accumulating evils by measures of compromise, which they well know are temporary, but which they think will last out their time, and give them popularity with the abettors of wrong, and with those who are too timid or lethargic to attempt to check it. They have their



reward. They get the popularity they seek: it lingers about their names, so long as their flatterers survive; but impartial posterity will write their story as of men who purposely sowed the wind, well knowing that those who should come after them would have to reap the whirlwind.

In more private but important trusts, there are those who, in the same spirit, evade all perplexing questions, all arduous responsibilities, who modify duty so as to make it smooth and easy to all concerned, who drop all difficult meshes in the web they are weaving, and perhaps victimize their successors for their own comfort. This has not infrequently been the secret of an unmerited reputation; and often has the blame of the negligence fallen on those whose hard duty it has been to supply the omissions and to right the wrong.

The disposition of which I am speaking, in every department of life, prompts one to do no more than will meet the immediate demand or exigency, to resort to all kinds of makeshifts, of temporary expedients, to aim at immediate success rather than at thoroughness and faithfulness. Thus, the worker with hand or brain, in his love of present ease, slights his work at points where he thinks its defects will remain undetected,—is superficial because it will cost him time and labor to be thorough. In handwork, we have all verified the wastefulness of this habit, to our cost, annoyance, and loss. In brainwork, a volume of the curiosi-

ties of literature might be made up of misquotations, wrong references, and inadvertent omissions, which have been transmitted in a long series by successive writers, every one of whom has professed the fresh study of original authorities. Under this same influence, you are well aware that our college work has often suffered, and with it those who have sought their ease more lovingly than wisely. The student omits the faithful application which alone can make him master of his subject, acquires just so much as will tide him over an impending examination, only to find, as he passes on to more advanced portions of his work, that what he had slighted is essential even to the minimum of what is now required of him.

This same tendency to consult present ease rather than permanent right or good is constantly and disastrously witnessed in the formation of habits. Many of us fall into more habits than we choose. Those we choose are generally worth keeping: as to the rest, the word "fall" is well used. It is oftener than not a fall,—a descent into a lower moral state than we should otherwise be in. But we retain habits which we disapprove, and which we do not mean to keep always, because it would give us trouble to drop or change them.

These instances may suffice to illustrate the tendency, which, in its passive form, is exhibited in our text,—to which in its active form we have

all been tempted, and perhaps have, all of us, so far yielded to it, that were it said, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone," there would be none who would dare to throw it.

In contrast with this habit of negligence, slighted work, living for the present or the immediate future, I want to urge upon you the imperative duty of thoroughness, fidelity, work into which you shall put mind and soul and strength to your utmost ability, work that shall stand the test of time, the severest human scrutiny, the inspection of our omniscient Judge and Rewarder.

This thoroughness, if it be indeed thoroughness, must, in the first place, belong to the principles that underlie the whole conduct of life. There may be a seeming goodness which has nothing of the soul of goodness in it,—negatively excellent, yet of doubtful promise in a world of temptation and peril. There are favoring currents of influence, example, and circumstance, in which a young man of good dispositions and feeble passions may float on for a while, unstained by surrounding evil, more innocent than virtuous, hardly needing the vigorous oar-arm to stem counter-currents or to keep clear of shoals or breakers. I know of no more significant chapter of sacred history than that in which we are told of one of the Hebrew kings that he did right in the sight of the Lord so long as Jehoiada, the high priest, lived and kept watch over him, but, when

Jehoiada died, fell at once into the worst ways of those who had held an evil pre-eminence before him. A young man in our time often has a manifold and multiform Jehoiada in home, society, immediate motive, prospective plans, favorable surroundings, and thus without any set purpose of right, or fixed rules of conduct, or settled principles, he may meet all just expectations. But how will it be with him when Jehoiada is dead, when he stands alone, when objects that seem to him desirable can be pursued only through tortuous or miry paths, when with maturing manhood passion grows strong, when he is thrown daily among men unscrupulous, yet successful and prosperous? A memory as long as mine can furnish not a few sad answers, in life-stories in which the brightest promise has been extinguished in shame and misery. It behooves you, more than all things else, to make your conduct absolutely your own, the result in every act of your own independent volition, and that volition based on substantial reasons, or rather on a substantial reason. That reason is the absolute right. Of this I do not believe that you will ever find yourselves in doubt. The practical questions which you will be tempted to ask, and perhaps to imagine that you are asking moral questions, will be in some such form as this, How far may I modify or compromise the right for ease, convenience, good fellowship,—as the king in our text would have said, “that I may have peace

in my time"? How near the confessedly wrong can I come without losing reputation? How far can I cross the border line, and yet secure an easy and safe return? You will find, as life opens before you, that to know the right is not enough: you will need irresistible motive to do the right; and I know not where that motive is to be found but in the fear and love of God, the faith of Christ, and the powers of the world to come.

With reference to the great truths of religion, it is too much the habit of our time to seek temporary peace rather than serious conviction; to yield to the careless, half-sceptical tone of feeling which one may easily catch from those around him, rather than to inquire for himself whether these things are so. One fact demands your diligent heed. It is this: The characters that you would take for exemplars have been formed in the school of Christ, shaped, energized, irradiated by him. The presumption, then, is in favor of the genuineness of his claim to be believed, obeyed, followed. This claim you are bound to consider and weigh thoroughly for yourselves, not on the sceptical side alone, but on all sides. Imagine not that religious faith is easy credulity. There are, among the firmest Christian believers, many who are intimately familiar with the whole literature of modern scepticism, and have only been strengthened by it. On so momentous a subject, if you would be thorough, you must form your own

opinions, not imbibe them ; you must dig around the foundations of religious belief for yourselves, and learn for yourselves whether they rest on a rock or on sand. I know that such faithful inquiry will plant you on the immovable rock, the corner-stone of the spiritual temple, Jesus Christ. And it is only on that foundation that the thorough, faithful life-work can be built. If, then, you would have, not peace for a brief day, but substantial, enduring, eternal peace, yours must be a life of Christian principle,—your reason for what you do must ever be, It is right in the sight of God and by the rule of Christ. Any thing short of this is a life of shifts and expedients, the mere yielding to the pressure and ministering to the ease of the passing moment, in whatever direction it may urge you,—a precarious and perilous way of living while it seems safe, and more likely than not, at some early period, to lead you into wrong and evil which now seem to you utterly impossible. The vulgar use of the verb “corner” has a strong moral significance. The right-meaning person, who lives on day by day with the sole purpose of making life easy, is apt to find himself suddenly cornered,—placed in a position where his only alternative is to declare and abide by principles which he does not possess, or to take an open position (which he has not yet taken) among the enemies of virtue. He has slidden till he can slide no longer, and now he must take a decisive step

without the preparation of spirit to insure the rightness of that step.

The determination to be thorough in one's life-work is a very important element in what lies or will lie before many of you,—the choice of a profession. I think that it would have altered the choice of not a few in every graduating class that I have known. A profession has often been chosen, not because the student was conscious of any taste or fitness for it, but because he thought he could, as the phrase runs, get along in it, or even because, in the affluence of other resources, he would have no need of getting along in it. It used to be almost universal, it is still altogether too common, for a college graduate to choose one of the so-termed learned professions, not because he felt any inward calling thereto, but because they had been traditionally identified with a liberal education. I wish they were so still. But they are no longer learned professions. In their lower ranks, and sometimes on the confines of the higher, not often within them, are men of very slender culture, so that a professional position is no longer evidence as to the kind or compass of one's preliminary training. Moreover, these professions are now so crowded as to offer no adequate compensation for any thing short, I will not say, of eminence, but of excellence. Taken man by man, I do not believe that the average income of a professional man in the United States is as large as that of a journeyman mechanic. In the

higher walks, there is always room, reward, honor for new aspirants of excelling genius or capacity; and such persons would make places for themselves, if they did not find them. But there is not one of you who is not able of excelling in some calling; and I would beg you each to choose that in which he is consciously capable of doing the most thorough work, of employing all his powers to the best advantage, of being able not merely to glide along quietly, but truly to live as a working force in his day and generation. It is time that it were better understood in our country that it is not the profession that reflects honor on the man, but the man on the profession. We need able and educated men in agriculture and manufactures, and there is not a department under those titles that may not be elevated, not alone in name, but in its permanent value as a factor in the general well-being, by such recruits as our colleges might furnish; while there are those who can never distinguish themselves as professional men, yet in other callings would develop capacity of high order and commanding reputation. But it cannot be too emphatically said that he who chooses a profession, I say not above, but aside from his capacity, is very unlikely to do honest, thorough work in it, will almost inevitably live by temporary expedients, will do what will give peace in his day, what will satisfy or stave off the immediate demand upon him, and instead of advancing will grow less, and not beau-



tifully less, in professional reputation and influence.

Let me now say a word on what lies close before most of you, the work of the coming year ; for most of you will be engaged either in teaching, in general study, or in preparation for some specific calling. It will be, perhaps, the most decisive year of your lives as to the formation of habits of study or labor. Many of you need only to take your college habits with you. But if there are those who have worked only to meet pressing demands, superficially, with a view to immediate peace and not to enduring benefit, this habit must be changed now, or probably never. Some of you mean to be teachers for a year or two, and then to take some other mode of life. The temptation may be strong to perform the minimum of work—if not in seeming quantity, in depth and thoroughness—that will avert complaint, and carry you easily through your allotted time of service. But, beside the dishonesty of slighted work, and the detriment to others, you cannot afford it for yourselves. The habit thus formed will almost inevitably follow you into what you mean shall be your permanent life-work. If you intend to do that thoroughly, discipline yourselves in the mean time by doing nothing to serve a turn, but every thing with rigid fidelity, with all that it can contain of mind and heart. In preparation for your life-work, whatever it be, you may seek peace by evading difficulties, by creeping

round obstacles, by skimming the surface of deep things, by adapting your labor to the tests—at best imperfect—by which it will be measured, by the endeavor to pass creditably rather than to acquire, comprehend, understand, and master every branch of every subject, and to take every step of advance warily on solid ground. But the peace thus gained will be won at the cost of permanent capacity, success, and reputation. Your only safe method will be to do whatever ought to be done in fitting time and order, to the best of your ability ; to gain higher standing ground by surmounting every obstacle ; to avert future floundering beyond your depth by sounding every deep in your way, and to advance to new work by leaving only finished work behind you. You will thus carry into life the only culture and habits by which you can have command of your resources, control of your surroundings, reasonable self-confidence in your undertakings, and a just claim to the confidence of those whose material interests, health, reputation, or spiritual guidance may be committed to your charge.

Let me now urge upon you some of the motives which should enforce thoroughness in all the parts and details of whatever it may be given you to do. We never know to what crucial, probing tests our work will be exposed. The superficial has its interior laid bare. The veneering which imitates solid work is chipped away, the plating which looks like silver is worn off ; and the cheap wood or the

base metal comes to light. The ease of to-day is the shame of to-morrow ; the peace of this year, the torment of the next. The idleness of the boy is the ignorance of the man. The negligences and omissions of youth are the discomfort and thriftlessness of age. There is a close continuity in our life-work. We have time enough, but none too much. The past can be repaired only at the cost of the present and to the detriment of the future. In situations in which constant vigilance is required in night-watchmen, the watchman is often required to make some adjustment of a sort of clockwork, to put in a bar, or to remove one, with the stroke of every hour ; and, if he sleeps on his post, the morning betrays him. Our life-work is just such a system of machinery ; only the detection may come upon us unawares, and the omitted work be betrayed at any moment. Retribution is but another name for consequence,—the unfailing relation of cause and effect ; and there can be conceived no more fearful, no more hopeful retribution than this. Our past furnishes the sole factors for our future. We are precisely what we make ourselves or suffer ourselves to be. Peace in aught but faithful, thorough, conscientious duty is no peace.

But, apart from these considerations, there is an intrinsic fitness in the sincere and thorough doing of whatever we do. It ought to offend our moral taste, our sense of proportion, symmetry,

and beauty, to be superficial, to be mere eye-servants. Yet in one most momentous significance of the term let us be eye-servants. Let us never forget the Supreme Taskmaster, whose command comes to us in every relation of life, in every call of duty, and under whose omniscient eye all our work is wrought. He who works as in his sight can do no sham-work, and on him are we to depend, on his impartial Providence, for a recompense measured by our fidelity. Nor is it to a far-off, but to an immediate award that we are to look,—to a judgment that is set and books that are opened, not in a remote and vague eternity, but now and ever.

The king in our text said more than he really cared to say. "There shall be peace and truth in my days." It was peace rather than truth that he was rejoicing in,—a peace, too, that had no underlying element of truth,—not a veritable peace, but a brief, hollow truce with inevitable calamity, desolation, and woe. Truth and peace are, indeed, inseparable. But truth lies, not in succumbing to evils, but in resisting them; not in ease, but in labor; not in negligence, but in painstaking thoroughness; not in evading responsibility, but in meeting it bravely and bearing it loyally; not in shunning conflict, storm, and tempest, but in waging the warfare and buffeting the gale; not in the relaxation, but in the full and vigorous tension of every nerve and muscle of the inner man; not

in earthly repose, but in a heaven won, a heaven begun. Not Peace and truth, but Truth and peace, should our motto read,—truth, the way of peace; peace, the goal of truth. Be truth ever our aim; God will care for the peace, and the peace of God that passeth all understanding shall be ours.

My friends of the graduating class, in the congratulations and hopes of this season, I cannot but feel sadly with you the vacant part in your Class-day services,—the translation of one so worthy of your pre-eminent regard to a higher school, and to the realm of purer song than could have found voice in earthly rhythm.\* That you so honored and loved such a man is to your great and enduring honor; and never have I been more strongly impressed with the high standard of sentiment, the just moral feeling, the true appreciation of genuine worth, characteristic of our University, than in the unanimous tribute of regret and affection, the tender, loving offices, the sweet service of song, the solemn reverence, which hallowed the church, the chapel, and the grave, to which you bore and where you laid all that was mortal of your class-mate. With no advantages but such as God gave him and his merit won, he illustrated my theme of to-day, not peace, but truth. His aims, though mediately for this earthly life, were more than earthly; and they have been realized

\* Earnest Upton Waters, who was to have been Class-Poet, died May 4, 1878.

too soon for us, but happily for him. We could not but feel the appropriateness of those words of ancient days that were read at his funeral: "Honorable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years. But wisdom is gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age. He pleased God, and was beloved of him. He, being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time. For his soul pleased the Lord; therefore hastened he to take him away." His was a truly consecrated life. Genius and unflagging industry would have given him a foremost place in whatever might have been his chosen career, whether in art in which the first-fruits of his endeavors gave prophecy of a rich harvest, or in the ministry of the Gospel, his alternative choice, which he would have adorned by the purity and sanctity of his life even more than by the rare gifts of poetic fancy, eloquent thought, and rhetorical power which would have insured his eminence. Let his memory be an inspiration. Be it ours so to live that there shall be for us like sorrow when we go hence, and like assurance that Death is but the gate-keeper of the higher life.

My friends, bear with you the lifelong regard of your teachers here. Think not that the rapid succession of classes impairs our happy remembrance of those with whom we are associated in the class-room, or our glad recognition of their merited success and well-won honor. Be assured

that success and honor are to be obtained only by deserving and earning them. Such has been your college experience ; it will equally be your experience in the outside world. May God give you the best you can desire ; and yet more, the heart to desire only his best gifts. You will part at Commencement, never to meet again on earth but with diminished numbers ; when there shall be not one of your names unstarred on the Catalogue, may there be an unbroken Class-meeting where there shall be no parting.

## XVI.

### THE CLOUD, AND THE VOICE OUT OF THE CLOUD.

(1879.)

“They feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear Him.”—LUKE ix. 34, 35.

THERE is in these words an appropriateness to the present occasion, which is probably felt by no one so strongly as by your preacher, who year after year has watched with loving solicitude successive classes as they have entered into the cloud; for such, my friends, is the next step on your life-way. For most of you, life—if it were to be spared on earth—has been thus far easily calculable,—arranged and provided for without any alternative course being distinctly contemplated. Now a doubt, before unknown, hangs over your future, which, under Providence, passes for the most part into your own disposal. There will probably be no epoch of your coming years when it will be so difficult for you or for your friends to foresee your earthly future, as it is now. A cloud rests upon it, luminous, indeed, to



your undimmed and hopeful vision, yet not for this the more translucent; and if you think you see through it, what you see is only your own day-dreams reflected from its surface. You have reason to fear as you enter into the cloud, if there be aught in the future that can harm you. At the same time you may dismiss all fear, if you are in the condition of those of whom Saint Paul says, "All things work together for good," and to whom he says, "All things are yours,—whether life or death, or things present or things to come, all are yours." All may be yours, even those things that seem least to be coveted,—yours in the sense, not of infliction or endurance, but of use and beneficial interest; for there is a divine alchemy which transmutes what are regarded as the most malign elements of human experience into means of spiritual growth, extracts gain from loss, distils joy from tears.

You are about to enter into the cloud. What for you lies under it? At best, much of the unknown, the unexperienced, the as yet unimagined, which for that very reason may make you fear that it may be uncongenial to you, or that you may fail of meeting it as it ought to be met,—of conforming yourselves to what it demands of you if you would profit by it.

You may encounter death beneath the cloud. Seldom has an unstarred class appeared on our Triennial Catalogue. The final summons comes,

---

not so often to those who are waiting and listening for it as to those who least expect it. I know that it is not uncommon to speak contemptuously of the fear of death, as characteristic of feeble souls. I cannot so regard it; and I apprehend that with many who profess not to fear death, it is its imagined remoteness that disarms it of its terror. The question for such an one is, Did you know that this were your last day, or week, or month, or year, would the knowledge disturb your serenity? I cannot conceive of him as fearless, who is consciously going to meet death under the cloud, without seeing through it, or knowing with a good degree of assurance whether there is any thing, and what there is, beyond it. We began to be; why may we not utterly cease to be? There is wretchedness in this world; how know we that we may not encounter it if we live on elsewhere? There is no earth-born philosophy that can interpret the past and the present of humanity, still less its future. Death, then, with uncertainties and mysteries which you have no earthly means of solving, is among the not unfit objects of fear as you enter into the cloud.

But for most of you, if not a long, a somewhat lengthened life in this world is in reserve. For most of you, too, there will be a large preponderance of happiness. Did you ever think of the meaning of our word *happiness*? It is an unconscious testimony, imbedded in language—which

often contains more truth than those who use it know—to the beneficent providence of God. It means *that which happens*, and it implies that the normal happenings to man are pleasure-giving, joy-giving.

Yet it can hardly be but that for some of you—God only knows for whom—sore calamities, bitter disappointments, severe bereavements, lie under the cloud, it may be, near at hand. Thus have we always seen it,—trials and sorrows so often falling where they are least looked for, that one ought not to enter on a new stage, even of early life, without recognizing his liability to the common lot, and feeling that whatever he most rejoices in on earth is his by so frail a tenure, that he should hold himself ready to yield it up at any moment.

But if your outward life be prosperous, with no early abatements or drawbacks, as will doubtless be the case with most of you, a yet deeper cloud may rest on what will be called your unclouded happiness. How character will bear continuous prosperity cannot be foreseen. For not a few, life is made worthless by the affluence of its so-called good things. The inner man so feeds on the materials of outward well-being, so digests them, so assimilates them, that it becomes itself of the same staple and substance with them, and loses its hold on those divine and spiritual realities which are its better, its only true life. The psalmist's words,

"Because they have no changes, therefore they fear not God," describe this condition, in which prosperity obstructs the soul's growth, and stimulates the lower faculties that find their scope and their joy in outward good. This grovelling experience is depicted by one of the prophets in a bold metaphor,—“Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel; therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed,” that is, his very ease, quietness, prosperity is the reason why he has grown no better. This you have reason to fear as you enter into the cloud,—a fear which may well chasten your hopes, as its tendency to realization is contingent on their realization. Nay, could you have the true springs of your well-being laid open to your clear view, I am not certain but that you might see cause for most dreading what you most desire; for if with smooth sea and genial breezes you are going to drop your oars, and yield passively to the currents and eddies on your life-voyage, you might bid a solemn welcome to high waves and adverse winds, which would task your strength and skill, and keep you alert and active.

Among the things which, were you wise, you would fear as you enter into the cloud, would be over-sudden success, over-rapid prosperity; for such experiences have with sad frequency been accompanied by changes for the worse in heart, soul, and

life. The prophet wept when he told gentle, ingenuous, innocent Hazael of the enormities of which he would soon be guilty, and as to which Hazael exclaimed in indignant incredulity, "Is thy servant a dog, that he should do thus?" But the future was fully interpreted when the prophet added, "Thou shalt be king over Syria." All along the ages, and under our own eyes, Hazael's has been a typical character. Sometimes, indeed, we are gladdened by its opposite; but oftener, the sudden glare and glitter are too much for frail humanity. So far, then, as there are for any of you what might be styled magnificent expectations, the foreshinings of an especially enviable condition in life, there is fully equal reason to fear for you as you enter into the cloud.

Still farther, you have reason to fear lest your characters remain stationary, as they assuredly will, at the best, without moral activity and enterprise on your part, without self-knowledge, self-chastening, self-discipline. Even a good character needs growth in order to remain good; for it has its faults, which, in the absence of spiritual self-culture, become indurated, while its virtues lose their freshness and fervor, grow mechanical and automatic, do less and less of heart-work and more and more of mere task-work. The elements of character must be in fruitful activity and in perpetual growth, that one may morally and spiritually hold his own. The talent wrapped in a napkin or buried in the

ground, even though it be a talent of pure gold, loses its lustre, and makes but a sorry show beside those that have been kept bright and have been multiplied by faithful use.

You have, then, all of you, reason to fear as you enter into the cloud.

But the last office that I would fill on an occasion on which I warmly sympathize with all that it has of gladness and hopefulness, is that of a prophet of evil. I would bid you fear, only that I may show you how you can enter into the cloud without fear. There comes to you, as to the apostles, a reassuring voice out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son, hear Him"; and if you will but hear Him, there is no fear for you.

Retrace with me the grounds of fear over which I have led you, and see how entirely their aspect is transfigured by him to whose words of duty, of the divine love, and of the life eternal, we are thus bidden to listen.

On our way back to our starting point we find first (for we passed it last), the fear of a stationary character, which is but another name for moral stagnation and imbecility. But what says Jesus? "Follow thou me,"—a command which gives the soul only the rest that there is in rhythmical movement, the peace that there is in balanced and harmonized activities. If you hear him, onward and upward endeavor will be your constant law. The perfect beauty and loveliness that are in him will

allow you no pause, so long as there is a grace in him of which you have not the growing likeness,—so long as there is a spot or blemish in you, however venial to human eyes, which makes or keeps you in any feature or aspect unlike him. In every department of secular and intellectual life you own the power of great models; you feel no ambition where they are wanting. Nor would you be content with a model which you could easily reach and transcend. Probably, because of its very lowness and easiness of attainment you would never put forth the energy needed to reach it. But an example which taxes your powers continuously, which grows upon you as you approach it, and keeps constantly in advance of you when it seems almost within your reach, claims and rewards your constant and enthusiastic effort. On the career of moral excellence you have one, and but one, such example in the Divine humanity of Jesus Christ, and his voice, if you hear it, will suffer you to seek no repose, save that of even and unintermitted progress toward and in him, the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Nor, if you hear him, need you fear success and prosperity; for you will learn of him, and he will make you feel, that you are but responsible stewards of whatever God gives you,—that your well-being is contingent, not on the having, but on the using. Stewards you are, not for yourselves alone, but for an ever enlarging circle through

which your growing influence shall make itself beneficently felt. Let me beg you to be not unmindful of the exceptional largeness of your stewardship, as those who have inherited for their culture the benefactions of preceding centuries,—of endowments founded in the self-denial of our fathers when they were poor, and feeble, and strangers in the land, enriched by the pious forethought of successive generations, hallowed by the earnest prayer of unnumbered faithful souls, dedicated in singleness of purpose to Christ and the Church, and bestowed only that Christ should never lack disciples here, or the Church lack pillars here shaped, rounded, polished, and adorned, from base to capital, in the beauty of holiness. Leading minds yours must be by virtue of your superior means of culture. On you rests the responsibility that they lead where they can be followed to the enduring good of those among whom your lot shall be cast. If there shall open for your early years only bright vistas as you move on under the cloud; if your best hopes shall be realized, your worthy ambition crowned with full success,—how redolent should be each successive year of gratitude to God, of the thoughts of peace which flow with his gifts into the heart not closed against his Spirit, and of that generous, diffusive love, which mounts first to heaven, and, reffluent thence, comprehends within its luminous sphere all that it can comfort, counsel, guide and bless!



Nor, if you hear him whom you are bidden to hear, need you fear sudden and great prosperity beyond your hope; for it will be to you only an enlarged stewardship, augmented opportunity of usefulness, added reason for the self-exhortation, "Bless the Lord. O my soul, and let all that is within me bless his holy name."

You do intensely need to hear him in your young, and bright, and happy days; for then are your strongest temptations, your most arduous perils. If nothing worse, you are in imminent danger of building character, happiness, hope, on those frail foundations which are at the risk of every vicissitude, which are more likely than not to fail you sooner than this earthly life shall cease, and which can by no possibility outlast it. Yet in all the prosperity which God may send, he seeks to bestow himself with his gifts, he invites your glowing thankfulness and fervent love, and multiplies for you materials with which, in duty and usefulness, in the loyal service of your Father and his children, you may build on the foundation which time and change and death cannot undermine, and on which the edifice thus built shall be your heavenly and eternal dwelling-place.

But for some of you, with almost absolute certainty, there lie near, beneath the cloud, disappointments, calamities, sad partings, it may be, from those dear to you as your own lives. Hear him, then, the Man of Sorrows, as on the mount

of transfiguration he stands in celestial radiance. Of what spake they,—he and the sublime old prophets that were with him? “Of the decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem,”—of the crown of thorns, the insults, mocking and scourge, the cross of shame and ignominy. These were transfigured with and in him,—the wound-marks, glory-marks; the jeers, hosannas; the emblem of lowest infamy, the symbol of all that is most grand and blessed in humanity. By him and with him shall your trials and griefs be transfigured. His Father’s perfect providence and almighty love shall make them but his kindly discipline for the heirs of his salvation. Are there before any of you earthly losses? Faith in Christ shall make them your heavenly and everlasting gains. Are there appointed for any of you bereavements that shall seem to maim and cripple, beyond restoration, the transient, dying life you lead here? Through him the two worlds are made one world; those divided between earth and heaven, one household. In him the dead live, and through him shall they be yours again, unchanged in love,—yours where they die no more, where death itself shall die.

For some of you, for some who least think it, the cloud into which you enter may deepen into the shadow of death. It is in vain that you ask, “Lord, is it I? Is it I?” The only answer is, “Be thou ready; for in an hour when thou think-

est not the Son of man cometh." Hear him, and you need not fear as you enter into the cloud, though it be dripping for you with the dews of death. For hath not he abolished death? Are not his words uttered for all time,—“He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die”? You can see through what we call death, only as he has transfigured it,—only by the light that streams from his broken sepulchre. Philosophy leaves you in doubt, now with a glimmering of hope, now in utter despondency. Earthly analogies point either way, according as you are in clear sunlight, or overshadowed by apprehension, sorrow or gloom. Would to heaven that you might so see through the cloud the inevitable future, that there should rise from each of your hearts the earnest appeal to him who alone leads to heaven the long procession of the dying, “Lord, to whom shall I go? Thou, Jesus, hast the words of eternal life, and thee will I hear. I will take thy resurrection as the foreshining of my own. Thee I must follow, sooner or later, through the death-shadow. Be it mine to hearken to thee now, to follow thee step by step till the shadow gathers over me, and then I know that the darkness shall be light about me. I will fear no evil, if thou be with me. Thy rod and thy staff shall guide me, and when I wake from the death-slumber, I shall be still with thee.”

My friends, I have spoken as I have to-day because I feel profoundly, and more and more so with my long and varied observation and experience, that religious faith and purpose are the only certain safeguards against the growing perils of life. So far as there has been among educated men a decline of loyalty to Christ and his Gospel, there has been a decline in those qualities which claim confidence and honor, which ensure unblemished reputation, which minister to social well-being and to the integrity and purity of public life. A non-Christian culture has utterly failed to justify itself in its nurslings. The names on our Catalogue which will go down to posterity with enduring lustre are, for the most part, such as have been inscribed in imperishable record among the servants of God and the followers of Christ. There, above all, I would have your names registered. The time will come when all other distinctions will seem to you of no significance; when you will need memory to hold the torch to an undying hope; when the remembrance of a life hallowed by the love of God, by the faith of Christ, and by the unselfish service of those for whom he lived and died and ever lives, will be to you light, and peace, and unspeakable joy. As you enter into the cloud, may you hear the voice that comes out of the cloud! It is the best parting wish that I can utter, the best parting prayer that I can offer for you.

## XVII.

### SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

(1880).

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."—1 JOHN V. 4.

We must overcome the world, or the world will overcome us ; and faith in that which is not of the world, in that which is greater, higher, better, alone can give us the victory.

My friends of the graduating class, you are going on your several ways, into a closer conflict with the world's adverse influences than you have yet waged, and you need, to protect you from harm, "the shield of faith." I use this apostolic figure, because faith is pre-eminently a shield. Things are to you what you believe them to be, and if you sincerely believe in a realm of being superior to the outward world, and in a life that transcends and will outlast your bodily life, your faith makes you a citizen of that realm, a partaker of that life, and therefore places you above and beyond the power of hostile forces in the lower sphere. For this reason, I crave for you, more than all things else, faith in the spiritual world and life, and in

Him whom I cannot but regard as the one authentic Revealer of that world and Herald of that life.

I apprehend that there is in many minds an impression that the recent progress and present aspects of what is commonly called natural science are inimical to spiritual faith, and have rudely shaken, perhaps entirely undermined, its foundations. There is much less ground for this apprehension than is commonly supposed. The few agnostics who have distinguished themselves in the advanced science of our time are conspicuous rather as exceptions than as specimens of their class. Among the foremost names in natural science, the greater part are, I think, those of sincere theistic and Christian believers. You may search Darwin's books in vain for a single irreverent utterance, while his recognition of the being and providence of the supreme Creator is neither infrequent nor ambiguous. In our own University, the world-renowned naturalist, who has from the first borne equal pace with Darwin, and has elaborated concurrently with him rather than received from him the theories that bear his name, deems it his highest blessedness that he is a disciple of Jesus Christ, and regards his philosophy as in part confirmatory, and in no part or way subversive, of even the most orthodox type of Christianity.

I am not going to present myself as either an advocate or an opponent of these or of any scientific theories. They are out of my sphere. I am not

qualified to expound or criticise them. Were I to undertake the task, I should fall as far below your scientific teachers, as they would fall below me were they to enter on the critical exposition of the New Testament. Nor have I any hostility to the theories that have taken so strong a hold on the scientific mind. Indeed, I have no doubt that they are all that is claimed for them by their most authentic expositors,—valuable working hypotheses, not unlikely to be progressively verified by more extended observation and research. I could admit them in full without having my faith in religious and Christian verities in the least disturbed; and I want to show you that they leave these verities and their evidence unimpaired, and unaffected except at points where they postulate the truths of religion, and add solidity to the ground on which those truths rest. If I can make this clear, I am sure that I shall have rendered to some of you a parting service which may be of substantial and enduring value.

I would first speak of what has been not inaptly called the physico-chemical theory of mental action, according to which all mental phenomena are reducible to physical laws, and are as necessary and inevitable as the working of similar laws in the outward world. Thus, given the brain and the environments of Nero and of Marcus Aurelius, it was impossible that the one should not have been a fiend incarnate, that the other should not have

been little less than a saint. Now, if we admit—and I am not disposed to doubt—that the brain and the nervous system constitute the medium of mental action, so that there is not a thought or feeling which is not contingent on a distinct physical process, still there is one salient fact for which this theory fails to account,—the fact of moral approbation and disapproval. The theory may be true; but if it be the whole truth as to mental action, then Nero is no more to be blamed than Vesuvius; Marcus Aurelius, no more to be praised than sunshine or a timely shower. Yet, believe what you will, you cannot get rid of the feelings associated with what are commonly called merit and demerit. There is no indignation against Vesuvius. The Neapolitans love it, are proud of it, and when its fiery streams have overwhelmed their hamlets, they return, as soon as it cools, to nestle again under its shadow. Did they feel thus toward their last Bourbon tyrant, who, indeed, did them mischief to the utmost of his ability, but who could work less harm in a twelvemonth than Vesuvius in the twinkling of an eye?

Punishment means more than prevention. Prisons and lightning-rods belong not to the same category, and yet, according to the theory under discussion, their purpose is identical. But from punishment we cannot eliminate the element of blame. Nor yet can this element come from the fact that human beings, though not able to do



otherwise, know what they do, and think they mean it. The more intelligent beasts know the mischief that they do, mean it, plan it, and manifest anger and spite in doing it; yet what sane man blames them?

Nor can the sentiment of approbation or its opposite be the result of transmitted and accumulated experience of the beneficent effects of what we approve and the injurious consequences of what we censure. For, in the first place, we praise or blame traits of character that have no direct or appreciable consequences in the outward world, and we especially admire whatever unveilings there may be of those modest graces that seldom see the light; and, secondly, mankind has had as long experience of harm from nature and from the lower animals as from man, and has been indefatigable in the devising of defences and precautions against such injury, yet without resentment, or any feeling corresponding to the sense of wrong that ensues upon human ill-doing.

Still further, we are ourselves distinctly conscious of good or ill desert. This consciousness, I have no doubt, is in part a physical phenomenon. My brain bears an essential part in telling me that I do well or ill; but it tells *me*, and as I receive the report, I am distinctly aware that—while if the reporter were my entire conscious self, the report would be a fiction—there is in and of me a larger and more comprehensive selfhood of

which it is true. I have a distinct sense, not only of the quality of my actions as good or bad, but of *myself* as having the same quality: and this quality eludes all physical definition and analysis; it submits itself to no physical test, and belongs to that sphere of being which, because it is not material, has been termed, by common consent, spiritual.

The reality of this spiritual element as a working force in our world is brought into strong relief by another scientific theory, the growth of our own time, namely, the convertibility and conservation of force. It is admitted that there is no creation or increase of energy in the material universe; the only question is whether there is not a gradual dissipation of it. Certainly, of physical force there is no more in the world than there was two thousand years ago. Yet has there not been a vast increase of human power in every direction in which it can act? Where lies this increase? Not in physical instrumentalities or their products. You might sweep the world clear of all that art, skill, and tilth have constructed and wrought upon its surface, and the work of these thousands of years would be more than replaced in a single century, by a force which does not reside in outward nature,—a force which has been gathering volume and momentum from the day when man first began to subdue the earth to his will, and which has been treasured and transmitted,—not in ma-

terial organisms ; for were they its receptacle and medium, they must have beggared and paralyzed for its increase all other material forces, which yet have suffered no perceptible diminution with the myriad-fold growth of what we call mind-power, soul-power.

Moreover, a preponderant portion of this mind-power is moral power,—the outgrowth of that sense of merit and demerit, approval and disapproval, which, as we have seen, cannot be accounted for by the material organism. Who can estimate the accession of power which has accrued to mankind through Christianity,—a power of which Christian nations are the depository, and the elect among Christian souls the full-charged and perpetually distributing reservoirs? The world has been constantly growing richer in the elements of power, and foremost among these elements are great examples, controlling influences, noble sentiments, agencies entirely divorced from material mechanism.

Nor can it be that the brain itself has acquired a stronger or a finer staple, or a more thorough and efficient organism. In this regard the ancient civilizations, with their perfect systems of physical education, must have had greatly the advantage of ours. The Greeks have left us brain-work which subsequent ages have emulated, but never equalled, and which only the chosen few can now appreciate as it was appreciated even by the populace of

Athens. Nor was it by arms alone, but still more by brain-power, that Rome gave law to the world. It has been with brains of much coarser fabric than those of Plato and Epicurus, Cicero and Virgil, but with a power which the old world knew not, emanating from the life and spirit of Him who made humanity divine, that men in these Christian ages, as reformers, philanthropists, champions of truth and right, have given their names to their times and their unspent soul-power to all coming time. There is, then, a force, which obeys not the material law of the conservation of energy, which has grown from age to age, and was never so potent as now; and this force, because it is independent of laws which bear undisputed sway throughout the physical universe, we fitly term spiritual.

I pass now to the evolution-theory. It is too early to predict its future with certainty. On the one hand, there are strong probabilities in its favor; on the other hand, it is not proved. It may follow the fortune of the hypotheses that have been crowned by one generation, deposed by the next; or it may be found so to harmonize all the vestiges of antecedent and the phenomena of existing organisms as to command permanently the suffrages of the whole scientific world. We will suppose it established beyond a question. So far from casting doubt upon religious verities, in its every aspect it leads us up to God.

Evolution implies, with its ascending scale of

types, an archetype toward which the series tends; else it is impossible to recognize a series, or to trace an orderly development. It comprehends successive stages of progress, from lower to higher forms, in a uniform direction. The stone, the earth-clod, unorganized matter, is at the foot of the scale. It has no individuality, no power to change its condition, no functional agency, no capacity of action, no faculty. It *is*, nothing more. From this as we ascend through the lower to the higher grades of vegetable organism, we find that what distinguishes the later and higher from the earlier and lower is superior faculty, and by *faculty* I mean the power of utilizing and of being utilized,—that of simulating, and approximating to, conscious relations with the surrounding universe. So far does this power extend in the more advanced members of the series, that poetry hardly exceeds the spontaneous imaginings of those most conversant with nature, when it ascribes to plants human passions and affections; and, on a glorious summer morning, the heart that throbs with praise and worship finds a truth far transcending prosaic fact in the strophe of the Hebrew psalm, "Then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the Lord." As we rise, step by step, from the zoöphites on the confines of the two realms to the higher orders of the animal kingdom, the successive grades are betokened by superior faculty, and not by more complex organisation; for this, could it not both utilize and be utilized,

would be mere surplusage, and not even organism. An organ is an instrument; and it is not the number or the structure of its parts, but the faculty that resides in them, that makes one organization superior to another. This faculty ranges in animals from merely automatic movement to voluntary and intelligent action, and along with each higher grade of intelligence we find corresponding physical tokens of a more advanced development. In man, so far as we can see, the series culminates in a conscious selfhood, mental and moral,—in a faculty which embraces or supersedes all lower faculties. Indeed, as we pass from the speck of mould up to man, we find that at each ascendant stage there is precisely this absorbing or superseding of such powers as belong to the next lower grade. Each grade thus comprehends all the lower, and gives presage of the higher. This is claimed to be true as to structural development; it is manifestly no less so as to the development of faculty. It is man's prerogative that he—and, we have reason to believe, of earthly beings he alone—is conscious of capacities not directly growing out of, or wholly contingent upon, his material organism and surroundings. Yet it is toward this higher condition that all the lower tend. The modicum of faculty possessed by the humblest plant or the lowest zoöphyte seems the germ of human faculty, into which, if naturally developed, it could not fail to grow.

But this type toward which all being tends postulates an archetype; and if the series culminates in that which is supra-material, and the being at the summit of the series transcends the lower members precisely by the distinct development of the supra-material element, must not the archetype also be supra-material? If the archetype were material, the summit of the series would be a perfect animal, which man is not, and never can be. Nor yet is he a perfect soul; but he is conscious of perfectibility,—he can conceive of himself as possessed in full of all the characteristics, not of material, but supra-material, moral, spiritual perfection. Must not, then, that perfection exist as an archetype, of which the ascending grades of faculty are successive types? Does the series aspire toward nothingness, and approach inanity at every stage; or is there at its unseen summit Infinite Perfection, evolving in long succession an ever nearer approach to Itself in Its own sentient universe? To this question, sound philosophy and religious faith give the same answer.

Still further, as each inferior type fulfills its manifest destiny, can we conceive that man alone falls immeasurably short of his? Or, rather, must there not be for him a lengthened, an infinite career, throughout which he may perpetually approach the goal toward which he aspires and tends? I cannot imagine to myself this series cut short at the very point at which it abuts on in-

finity,—this mounting, struggling, panting life of the soul arrested just when it begins to know its own unlimited capacities. The series in its step-wise ascent points on and up, beyond the vision of the sensual orb to regions where faith is sight, to the All-Perfect Archetype whose image we bear, to the eternal life in the bosom of the All-Father, —a life that shall partake ever more fully of His, and still, the more it has, shall crave the more. Indeed, the law of evolution points to the twin developments, of ever higher perfection in the successive eras of human life on earth, and of ever larger powers and nobler attributes for the individual soul beyond the death-shadow.

To pass to another view of evolution,—does it look like chance-work? The argument from design has been abused by those who have employed it, and, because of its abuse, has been vilified. When urged with reference to details, a double interpretation is always possible. Objects that seem adapted to one another may have been created with reference to one another, or by continuous juxtaposition may have grown into mutual adaptation. But orderly evolution from brute matter; myriads of worlds, each with its differing glory, globing themselves in symmetry and in harmonious relations, from homogeneous star-mist; organic, vegetable, animal, human life rising by successive gradations from formless patches of protoplasm,—can all this have been the dice-work of mindless chaos, the



outcome of atoms swirling aimlessly in infinite space? Bear it in mind that nothing can have been developed that was not contained in that from which it was evolved; that every film of star-mist, every speck of protoplasm, must have had within itself the germs of all that it has become. This is possible in the design of omnipotent wisdom; but did I accept this theory in its full import, so far from banishing God from my conception of the universe, it would only fill me with a more overwhelming sense of His infinity, and would call forth only the more fervent ascription, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty!"

Nor does this theory make Him any the less the present, the ever-present God. If an initial purpose launched the as yet formless universe into being, with its multiform capacity of becoming all that it is or ever will be, time is but a category of finite being. In the Infinite Mind there can be no distinction of past, present, and future. He is from eternity to eternity, and in every stage of development He is no less present than were each stage a fresh creation. Nay, it is a fresh creation; for the Omnipotent Will must be incessant, eternal, else not omnipotent. He is no less the Immanent Cause than the First Cause. The universe subsists, the vast design unrolls, by His unceasing fiat. Let that fiat be for one instant withholden, the universe vanishes like the shadow of a dream. Law is but a provisional fiction of philosophy,—the non-

religious name for the modes of administration of an orderly universe. Law has a real meaning only for conscious law-keepers,—for men and angels, not for suns and stars and oceans,—for intelligent causes, not for unintelligent effects. There is no power of obedience in the inanimate objects to which we apply that term. Cut them adrift from the infinite, unceasing Will-Power which holds them in their places and their courses,—there would remain for them no law but inertia, which would either arrest them in eternal stillness, or hurl them into internecine chaos.

It may not unfitly be asked, What place does the evolution-theory leave for Christianity? I answer, It not only leaves, but postulates, a place for precisely what we Christians believe and claim. It gives us the largest view of the divine omnipotence, to which all things needful and desirable are possible. It presents, not fragmentary and questionable instances of design, but a design embracing all worlds and beings, which can leave no portion of the infinite plan unachieved, no development incomplete. It shows us man at the summit of the series, with supra-material powers, tendencies, aspirations. The Infinite Providence has supplied the needs, filled out the capacities, rounded the destiny of all orders of being up to man. That they could avail themselves of more than has been given them, we have no token. But if man has an exceptional capacity, why should we suppose that uncared for?

If man is capable of rising toward the Supreme Archetype, what more probable than that this Archetype should have been placed before him, so far as its attributes could be incarnated in a human form, and under such conditions as to become a central object of reverence, love, and imitation for all coming ages? Moreover, if the law of development pervades all organized being, should we not expect that it would equally pervade the history of man? If so, then the Divine Humanity would not have had its place at the threshold of man's being upon the earth, but would have awaited the fullness of time, and have been preceded and prepared for by such prophets as have left their record in the Hebrew literature,—by such sages and philosophers as equally shed the forecast rays of the coming day on Greece, on India, on Persia, and, it may be, with feebler light on many other lands and races.

Science does not, indeed, prove Christianity; yet it more than leaves its area uninvaded. Its latest utterances crave for man, the exceptional head of the series, precisely what Christianity supplies by ministering to his conscious capacities and needs, by ensuring to him a destiny adequate to his aspirations. Christianity relies on evidence entirely outside of the sphere of natural science. As to its external and historical proof, suffice it to say that, after passing through the severest criticism, it never rested, in the minds of such believ-

ers as have carried the strongest lights of reason and learning over the whole field, on so firm and impregnable ground as now. But it is its own best evidence. Those best know it to be divine, who have tested it by their prolonged and profound experience, who have sought in it a guidance that has never misled them, a consolation that has never failed them, a strength that has been made perfect in their weakness, a hope that has grown clearer and brighter as the shadows have gathered over their westward way and their declining years.

Here I cannot but ask you to consider the place which Christianity holds in the history of human thought. It is the only permanent phasis of belief or speculation that has come down to us from its birth-time. Behold the long procession of theories and philosophies, each paraded as humanity's last word and ultimate, irreversible truth, which have chased one another into oblivion, sometimes reappearing from the Lethean stream, only to be again submerged; while this one religion, this one theory of God, the soul, and eternity, this one philosophy, deemed by its believers divine, has remained undimmed, unchanged, unmoved, like the sun among fitting clouds, like the cliff on the margin of the river, like the bow over the rushing waterfall. To whom, then, will you go? Jesus, and He alone, has the words of eternal life, and we believe and are sure that He is the Son of the Living God.

My friends, I have assumed, as to natural

science, the position which is likely for the present to be maintained by those who, in their own department, have the best right to speak with authority. I find that between this position and that which was currently held when I was of your age, there is no sensible parallax in my view of the objects of my religious and Christian faith and reverence. In science, you will not take opinions on mere hearsay evidence, but will seek to know the reasons for your beliefs. On the immeasurably more momentous subjects connected with your own being, duty, and destiny, let me beg you not to fall without reflection into any current of sceptical thought, but to give full scope to the claims of religion and Christianity on your serious, earnest and profoundly interested inquiry. Take counsel of your higher nature, of your moral, spiritual needs, of your condition as those whose longest lease of life will seem, as your years roll on, oh! you know not how brief and transient, of those yearnings for immortality which well up in your hearts only because there is an Infinite Fountain that can fill them. God grant you the best of this world that can be yours, and heaven still be yours! May He be your Guide on the unknown ways which lie before you; and, while this may be your last meeting on earth in undiminished numbers, may there be an unbroken class-meeting where there is no parting, when the star shall have been entered on the catalogue for your last solitary survivor!

## XVIII.

### CHRISTO ET ECCLESIAE.

(1881.)

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever"

—HEBREWS XIII. 8.

FOR you, my friends of the graduating class, and still more for me, at the close of my long term of official service here, this is a season of retrospection; and while my personal conversance with the University covers little more than one-fifth of its life-time, I probably have witnessed wider departures from its first estate than had taken place in the two preceding centuries. If the eye is indeed an inlet to the mind, we ought to be kept in perpetual remembrance of the prime purpose and aim had in view in the establishment of the College. CHRISTO ET ECCLESIAE (To Christ and the Church), emblazoned in these windows, is stamped on every college-document, will hold a conspicuous place on the parchment of your diplomas, and will be adopted by your class-committee in printing your valedictory oration and poem. This was not, indeed, the first seal. VERITAS (Truth) was the original motto; but

how entirely truth was conceived of as identified with him who alone could say, "I am the truth," appears from the very early substitution for VERITAS of IN CHRISTI GLORIAM (To the glory of Christ), and, shortly afterward, of the present form. Extant records show that from the earliest times there were not infrequent deflections from the strictness of religious rule and principle, and in the course of the last century occurred scenes and seasons of irrepressible disorder and misdoing, which have had no parallel within the memory of living man; but until the accession of President Quincy the College retained much of its ecclesiastical character. The President was chief priest as well as chief ruler; the principal clerical functions connected with the College devolved on him; the professors and tutors officiated in turn at the daily devotional services; and the students were held more rigidly to the outside forms of religious observance than even to the regulations—by no means unexact—of the college-police. At the same time, the Divinity School took the unquestioned primacy among the graduate departments, and a very large proportion—seldom less than one-fourth—of each year's graduates became clergymen. For the last half-century in many respects there has grown up a very different order of things, and the College certainly no longer bears on its face the motto inscribed on its shield. The change, whether desirable or not, was inevitable.

There has been a like change in the surrounding community, and—what it is of especial consequence to observe—in the actual religious life of the community. Yet I do not believe that, viewed in all its aspects collectively, there has been in New England a decline in religious faith or character. I am painfully aware that there is an increased number of persons of high position and blameless life who openly take their stand outside of the churches and of religious organisms; but I doubt whether they exceed the number of those of equal strength of mind, though of inferior æsthetic culture, who half a century ago either covered their unbelief to escape social ostracism, or wooed such ostracism by the coarse and scurrilous profession of infidelity. While certain classes of advanced thinkers (as they are often called; may they not be retrograde?) see one another through multiplying-glasses, and make much parade of their honest and sanguine, yet delusive estimates, the ranks of sincere and earnest Christians are not perceptibly thinned. While there is much less than there was—much less in some respects than I wish that there were—of the outward form of godliness, there never was so much as now of faithful Christian work—meant, too, to be Christian work—for the relief of human want, suffering, ignorance, and sin; and a great deal of the genuine religious principle and feeling which used to find



vent chiefly in set phrase, in social worship, and in uttered exhortation or prayer, is now more Christ-likely embodied in active philanthropy. In our College, too, while I lament the sad indifference of many to the truths and sanctities of religion, I cannot say that the former times were better than the present. The secret societies of my time in college were the religious societies, and their members might have been counted on the fingers, sometimes of one hand. Those societies are now recognized and honored institutions, with a large membership, and comprising their full proportion of those foremost in scholarship and social position, as in character. On the other hand, the influences adverse to Christianity, though more conspicuous, are, it seems to me, fraught with less peril than the stealthy propagandism that used to be attempted by the circulation of books and pamphlets teeming with vulgarity and blasphemy.

But is there good reason for retaining our college-seal, and making it our endeavor to verify it by filling in what is lacking in the consecration which it signifies? Let me beg you to listen, not merely as to what it may be fitting for your valedictory preacher to say, but as to what may be of the profoundest concern for each and all of you in the life that now opens before you. Does the consecration of these halls by our fathers to Christ and the Church hold good for all time? Is Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to-day,—in the

nineteenth century as in the first? If so, we may be safe in adding the "for ever" of our text; for that which is changeable and transient could not have retained its identity through the revolutions, destructions, and renovations of these eighteen hundred years.

Let us, first, look at the person and character of Jesus Christ. For he is his religion. It is impossible to separate his teachings from his life. In this respect he stands alone in all these ages. There are other great teachers whose words would be worth as much as they are, were they anonymous,—some, like Seneca, whose words would be of much greater significance and impressiveness, were they not at harsh variance with what is known or suspected of their characters. On the other hand, there are good lives which we contemplate with admiration and love, yet which at the best teach us nothing new,—generally deriving their lustre as reflected light from Christ, and differing from him in that they reflect his light unevenly; that they are models of some, not equally of all virtues; that they have about them the birth-marks of country, time, and circumstance; that they are not cosmopolitan in such a sense that they are equally impressive, edifying, and instructive to persons of all ages, lands and conditions; and that they are not inexhaustible and ever-new in their interest, and most earnestly and diligently perused by those most familiar with them.

Think one moment. These four inartificial memoirs of Christ have been read for nearly two thousand years, by myriads of people, in public and in private. We grow familiar with their words. Thousands upon thousands know them by heart, yet never read or hear a portion of them with weariness. They are read through twice a year in the services of some churches, as often in many Christian families. Yet no one says, "Lay them aside, and read something else in place of them. Let us have some other good life, and not the perpetual repetition of this which we know well enough already." That books will last and wear like these indicates something unique in the life which they portray. They alone, of all books, are like the great works of the creation, like the flowers and the stars and the glowing sunsets and the sparkling waters, which we never behold to satiety, but which are more beautiful to us the longer we live.

Moreover, as I have said, we find Christ's religion, his ethics, in his life, and we best read them there. Thus, do we seek a clear view and crave a profound feeling of the munificent providence of the Universal Father? Where is his benignity, his compassion, his tenderness, his watchful care, his joy-giving spirit mirrored as in Christ,—in his words of love, his works of mercy, his reconciling cross and peace-speaking blood, so that he but anticipates uniform Christian experience when he

says, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"? Or is there any virtue or spiritual grace—piety to God, resignation, meekness, gentleness, humility—in which we would fain baptize our own spirits? How shall this be, unless we baptize ourselves anew in the contemplation of his devotion, his abounding charity, his majestic lowliness, his sublime endurance?

St. Mark gives but a few of his discourses, and those few abridged. Yet there is not a lesson of truth or duty drawn out at length by the other three evangelists, which we may not read as distinctly and impressively in St. Mark's simple record of Christ's daily walk, of his intercourse with all sorts and conditions of men, of the Divine humanity from which goes forth a perpetual effluence of all that is most winning, endearing, stimulating to the conscience, fraught with instruction in righteousness.

Consider, too, how he is at once identified with, yet detached from, his surroundings, and he could not be the one without being the other; for those traits of perfect humanity that were in him could have their manifestation only in the actual world in which he moved. Yet they are to that world like the circumambient air about us, which is in contact with every being and substance, while never yielding up its specific properties,—with and in all, yet its identity unchanged. Though among Jews, he is no more a Jew than had he lived in

Arabia. We never feel that the peculiarities, much less the prejudices, frailties, or follies of his age and people cleave to him, or dim his lustre as the Sun of Righteousness for our whole race, or make his example any the less the cynosure for those of all nations, for man so long as he shall upon the earth, for man so long as he shall live with God in heaven.

Mark, too, how his character transcends even the grandest chapters, and gives their chief interest to the sublimest scenes, of his outward life. The narrative of Lazarus restored to his sisters from the sepulchre at Bethany owes its surpassing charm less to the event itself than to our Lord's tender sympathy,—to the heart that drinks in the tears of the stricken household, bears their griefs, carries their sorrows. As we read—and who can read the story for the hundreth time without profound emotion?—we have reached the climax of majestic sweetness and sovereign love before he arrives at the tomb; it no longer surprises us that a voice like his could wake the dead; and we can only pray that, when we lie down to our last sleep, it may be to hear that same awakening voice summoning us where death itself shall die.

This character which grows upon us whenever we attempt to define it, so that in no other office do words so utterly fail to overtake thought and feeling, is the essence of Christianity,—at once its body and its soul. It has been, beyond a ques-

tion, the greatest force in human history. Its influence has, from its first appearance among men, culminated without decline. It has formed the best and most noble minds and souls of each succeeding age, those most loved and honored of their race; and they who have won the crown of surpassing excellence have always been the most ready to cast down their crowns before him, and to cry, "Thou alone art worthy."

Such, till now, has been the aspect which Jesus has borne; such the light in which he still is seen. He lived in an age, in point of knowledge, of science, of the humanities, if not of the luxuries, of civilization, far beneath our own,—in a country on which the rays of classic culture shone only by dim and distant reflection, and where the refinements of the world's great capitals had hardly modified the simpler manners and habits of provincial life. We have his picture painted for us by men of scanty education, of a narrow range of thought, and of obscure social position. It may have been no marvel if they accounted him great. But they do not say so. They waste no words in panegyric. They give us a plain, unambitious narrative of what they heard and saw,—a story so simple that we can account for its unemotional, prosaic style only by its literal truth,—by their having been so intimately familiar with the wondrous life that it had ceased to surprise them, just as dwellers in Alpine regions

might write coolly and calmly about "signs and wonders of the elements" of which the very thought stirs our pulses to a quicker throb. We have Jesus as he appeared to their always upturned view. The ages have piled up vast masses of intelligence and erudition, of proud names, great examples, glorious achievements. We stand on the mountain; they were on the plain far, very far below. We from our eminence look down on all that the intervening ages have brought forth. To him alone must we look up. He holds in our time the same moral, spiritual pre-eminence in which he was beheld by the humble fishermen of Galilee. The same yesterday, to-day; how can we fail to add "and for ever"?

But "No," say some who claim to represent the ripest thought of the age; and chiefly those whose work has been with the microscope and the scalpel. The laws of development which they trace, the laws of transmutation which they postulate, among the lower regions of animated nature, they claim for mind and soul, for genius and virtue, for philanthropy and piety. Generalization *per saltum*, by a heaven-wide leap which no sound philosophy sanctions, reduces all phenomena that have been supposed to belong to a super-sensual realm into chemico-physical phenomena, occurring in an inevitable and endless chain of antecedents and consequents, each link evolved from the inherent force of automatic nature. Jesus, with whatever of

moral power, of spiritual beauty, may be found in him, can have been only a spontaneous, necessary product of that coarse Galilean soil, of that narrow, bigoted people, of the traditions of the synagogue about trivial ritualistic details and hair's-breadth distinctions in casuistry, of the rude discipline of the carpenter's shop, and the unlettered peasantry of the despised Nazareth. I would only ask you to attempt the application of this theory to Homer, to Raphael, to Dante, to Shakespeare, to men that might be named from every age, whose antecedents and surroundings could account for nothing in their genius but its defects and limitations. When you can bring them into line with the natural history of zoöphytes and tadpoles, even then I doubt whether you can force into the same category him among the children of men in whom the closest scrutiny reveals neither defect nor limitation, but only finer lines and richer tints of spiritual beauty and loveliness. In truth, every exceptional human being, every transcendent genius who has stood forth from his own kindred, race, and age for the admiring wonder of all times and lands, is an index of a higher order of phenomena than those of mere physical development,—of a Divine spirit which fashions man, not by an inevitable pattern, but of its own free and gracious will, and implies, too, the possibility—but once actualized—of the incarnation of that spirit in a human form that shall in all its aspects mirror

---



and image its Divine Archetype. I am glad to relegate to material science the entire realm of what is confessedly and manifestly physical, and if it shall only trace by authentic tokens—which it has not begun to do—my descending line of ancestry, I will not as regards this bodily frame disown the parentage which, on æsthetic grounds, I yet would fain ignore; but there is an ascending line of spiritual ancestry reaching back and up to God, to which my own consciousness bears such testimony as I cannot deny or evade, and which, did not my soul feel its divine sonship, is still made manifest in Jesus, who was confessedly the son of Mary, and no less indubitably by infallible birth-marks the Son of God.

Jesus being what he is in perfectness of character, in the spiritual primacy which he holds in the minds and hearts of myriads of loyal believers, of thousands of the wisest, greatest, and best all over the civilized world, of not a few of the foremost adepts in the very science in whose name his sovereignty is disputed,—filling in our own age of advanced culture the same transcendent place in which the reverence and love of his pristine disciples enthroned him,—I can see no reason why his name should ever be erased from our college-seal, still less, why the consecration should not be to-day as sincere and genuine as it was when the unskilled burin of the old colonial engraver first scratched those letters there. But the consecra-

tion must be, not in glass and parchment. Its altar and its sacrifice are the living soul. I am glad to know that by some of you our seal is distinctly recognized as expressing the only worthy aim of this earthly life. Would to heaven that the self-consecration to God and duty, nothing less than which can it mean, might be consummated in each one of you ! It will be your highest joy, your pledge of a success which no earthly failure can arrest or mar,—of honor on which obscurity, or human misapprehension, or ill report can cast no shadow.

“To Christ and the Church,” is our motto. Not to enter into technical exposition, it is enough to say that the Church implies the open avowal of Christian faith, and union in worship and in Christian service with those who make the like avowal. In a time when there is much hostility, open and covert, to Christianity, it becomes one to show his colors. Jesus received Nicodemus by night, but Nicodemus came uninvited ; nor can I think that the complacent regard of our Saviour can now rest on those who dare neither to drive from their hearts nor to take upon their lips the faith of their childhood. He who really believes in Christ is bound for his own sake to give to his faith the precision, consistency, and force which are always given to what we believe by profession and utterance ; and for the sake of others it is incumbent

on him to throw the weight of his influence and advocacy on the side of his convictions. The Church—not in any narrow or restricted signification, but in the sense which we cannot doubt Jesus would give to it, as embracing all who in the way that seems to them true and genuine attest their loyalty to him—is the main aggressive force against human guilt and misery, the chief instrumentality for the virtue, progress, and happiness of our race. If the college is to send forth men with trained and furnished minds, fitted for foremost places in the community, it is in the Church that they can do the most efficient service; and there is no power or attainment of the educated intellect, which cannot be and ought not to be consecrated to the conferment of those highest benefits to man, which are identical with the ascendancy of Christian faith and principle.

My friends, permit me in conclusion to urge upon your serious thought our college motto. You must admit that Christ and the Church, if they hold any place, are entitled to the first place. Indifference to Christianity, common as it is, is utterly unreasonable. Religion, if it belong anywhere, has its rightful office, as the shaping element of character, as the habitual spring of action, as the guiding principle of life. Its claims are not duly met by tacit assent, but only by the consecration of the heart, the will, the active

powers to its cultivation in your own souls, to its diffusion in the world around you. It is not a mere sentiment, but a pervading spirit and an energizing force. Your superior privilege sets you apart as lights of the world. It is, therefore, incumbent on you to see that the light within you be not darkness; and, if it be indeed light, to cherish and intensify its clear shining in the entire sphere of your example, influence, and endeavor. For these many years, in the pulpit and in the class-room, it has been my constant aim and effort to give Christianity the queenly place which, or none, is rightfully hers. My parting wish for you is that she may hold this place in your hearts and in your lives. May the blessing of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all and in you all; and Heaven grant that on the opening career, the growing honor, the finished course of every one of you may be engraved the legend of our college seal, *CHRISTO ET ECCLESIAE*.

## XIX.

### HOSPITALITY.

(1883.)

“Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.”—HEBREWS XIII. 2.

So, I think, those of us who are householders can testify. We have found angel guests, life-long friends, in strangers whom we first received for their sakes, and were ever afterward glad to welcome for our own. Hospitality—perhaps now oftener a privilege than a duty—was, when our text was written, not infrequently an imperative duty. Only thus could a wayfarer be sure of a safe and comfortable shelter. He might be left houseless, and there are on record cases in which travellers, spurned where they sought lodgings, and constrained to pass the night in the street, came to grief, and brought guilt and shame on those who had closed their doors against them. The inns, scattered at remote distances on the chief routes of travel, sometimes, as at Bethlehem, in villages on the great highways, oftener in solitary places, gave enclosure and security,—nothing more. No one stayed or wanted to stay at them.

They were frequented only by sojourners for a night or for a sultry noontide hour. No wonder that hospitality held an honored place among the virtues, in classic fable richly recompensed by itinerant gods, in holy writ commended by explicit precept and illustrious example.

The outward is the type of the inward; things seen, of things unseen; the houses in which we dwell, of the houses which we are; our attitude toward human guests, real or potential, of our posture of mind and heart towards thoughts that come as strangers, new, yet not therefore true, and equally not therefore untrue,—strangers worthy of a hospitable reception, even though they remain not with us,—perhaps angels, whom, once lodged within, we shall not willingly let go from us. There are, moreover, some minds that will not, some that cannot show hospitality; for hospitality presupposes a home and a guest-chamber.

There are some whose minds have no guest-chamber. They regard hospitality as a sin. They have taken in a set of opinions—truths they call them; truths they may be or may not be—and they have no room for anything more. The walls of their intellect are built up, brick upon brick, laid in insoluble cement; the structure, of the scantiest dimensions, is early finished and ceiled over; and no power on earth can either tear it down or enlarge it.

Others there are whose minds have no home-

apartments, but are like the oriental caravansaries, always open, because they have no doors that can be shut. Every vain dream, or fleeting fancy, or baseless theory has free admission, though but brief stay. The guests that come to-night are gone to-morrow. What these men call their firm convictions can be put to instant flight by the merest cavil of sceptical criticism. Even their own self-consciousness they learn from the latest authority, and slough it off when that authority ceases to be paramount. Incongruous ideas, incompatible theories, like uncongenial lodgers at a tavern, are quartered side by side, yet remain not together long enough for their host to detect their mutual dissiliency. But in the promiscuous crowd of comers and goers truth finds neither unobstructed entrance nor space for quiet abode, even as God's Truth incarnate first saw the light of this world in a stable, because the throng of chapmen and donkey-drivers left no room for him in the inn.

Meanwhile, there are new guests, with just claims on hospitality, continually arriving, and never so many as now. They come from two directions,—from the unknown and from the partially known. They come from the unknown, which is still an immeasurably vast domain,—though finite, to our apprehension infinite,—growing, too, upon us faster than our knowledge grows; for every province annexed to our science

gives us a dim, yet yearning sense of abutting provinces of our nescience, and as the horizon that bounds our knowledge enlarges its circumference, it indicates an ever more extended region of things knowable which it hides from our view. The term *agnostic* would be by no means inappropriate as characterizing the relation of human science to the fields of its research, and those who know the most are the men who are conscious of knowing the least. The term is misapplied, only when employed as to our knowledge of Him whose being underlies all that is not chaos, and without whom the existence of the very minds that fail to recognize Him is inconceivable.

As to the partly known, also, there are constantly urged upon us new theories, profounder analyses, broader generalizations, in all of which there is verisimilitude, that is, a truthlikeness, yet not therefore necessarily truth. A theory may be plausible at first sight, simply because it is superficial; an analysis, directed by a false theory, may be so misdirected as to travesty the very facts that it reveals; a generalization founded on accidents, not on properties, may place objects or phenomena elsewhere than among their own legitimate kindred. But through these risks we must make progress toward a clearer view, a larger comprehension, a more tenacious grasp, of what we know in part, and it is only by hospitality to all guests that come to us with worthy credentials, that we can learn



which of them we ought to keep, and which to dismiss.

Now the great work of a liberal education is to make room for guests, to enlarge the mind in every dimension, to give it a receptivity at once generous and discriminating, and to teach it where to look for truth, how to test what claims to be truth, and so to order its own contents that they may be always accessible and serviceable. Four years at the University, at what is of necessity the formative age as to mental habits, may be of unmeasurable or of infinitesimal value, and whether it be the one or the other depends less on the fact than on the kind of industry. If the time be devoted to the acquisition of details, to the memorizing of the contents of books, the graduate, though a hard student, will not have transcended the grade of intellect implied in the literal meaning of our term *sophomore*. He not only will have gained no thorough knowledge of anything, but he will have no just conception of the relations and bearings of such sections and patches of things knowable as he seems to have made his own. But the same time passed in conversance with fundamental principles, truths and laws in the several departments in which a man of advanced culture has no right to be ignorant, while it will give very little knowledge of particulars, will fit one to be a successful learner and investigator in whatever realm of science or literature may claim his study and research. University

training should not fill the mind,—that could be done only for a mind not worth filling; but it should make the mind so large as to preclude the thought of its ever being filled.

The mind thus trained has ample guest-chambers, and is prepared for a generous hospitality. But shall this be all? Shall the mind be a mere inn; or a home also? Are there truths that may be so lodged within that they can never be dislodged,—truths in whose society all new-comers that have a right to fair entertainment, even if for the briefest stay, may be made welcome, and with which sophistry and patent falsity will find themselves in uncongenial company? Without such permanent inmates there can be no true hospitality. There is no hospitality in a tavern, open to travellers of every sort, and equally little is there in the mind that knows no difference between a tramp and an angel.

Now there are truths which may be so determined that they need not be reconsidered, but may be regarded as less possessions than attributes of the mind, elements of its own consciousness; and truths of this class are among the earliest attainable, and at the same time are essential factors in the judgments that are or ought to be passed on all other alleged truths. It is manifest that such truths must be; else there could be progress neither in the individual nor in the race,—the only possible movement would be as on a wind-swept sea of ice.

●

There are in all departments of science settled, closed questions which can never be opened again, and the re-opening of which would make science a word without meaning. To be sure, these established truths may be embraced and merged in still more comprehensive truths; they are thus, however, not negated, but re-affirmed and eternized.

In the moral and spiritual universe the mind may early have closed questions, established truths; and it is of prime importance that the momentous issues in this entire department be not left open.

The question that takes precedence of all others is that of the being of a God, self-conscious, omniscient, supreme, Creator, Father. This lies behind, and is independent of, all cosmological theories. It would scandalize no intelligent theist were the present tendency of natural science followed to its extreme, and the entire realm of organized being (and with it what we call mind and soul) traced back to homogeneous specks of protoplasm. I do not believe this, indeed, though I have no doubt that to evolution belongs a large part of what half a century ago was termed creation. But suppose all that evolutionists can claim, one cannot but ask whether it is conceivable that atoms swirling in infinite space should, of their own motion, shape themselves into self-multiplying cells, having within them the germ, and prophecy, and promise of all this fair universe of verdure, bloom and fruitage, of glad life and strength and beauty, of will,

intelligence and love. There probably exist at this moment within the range of telescopic vision precisely such conglomerations of nebulous matter as our solar system was or may have been. Suppose that you, with your present human intelligence, with clear vision, and a life whose hours were centuries, were to watch in one of these world-teeming nebulae the cooling and globing of successive rings around the still flaming nucleus, the movements of unconnected atoms into the rudiments of organic life, the successive stages of development, culminating in powers which—if there be a God—are nothing less than godlike,—could you for one moment believe this grand procession of being marching with ever-growing ranks along the ages without a leader, these multi-form types of life launched into existence without a life-bestower, these laws that clasp the whole system in a zone of perfectness enacting themselves without a lawgiver? Yet more, taking your stand in thought by a lump of lifeless, shapeless matter, can you conceive of its spontaneously becoming yourself, with your present capacity of thinking, knowing, feeling and willing, even though the process took unnumbered centuries, the conditions were all in accordance with the latest postulates of science, and the matter veritable star-dust? Science, you must remember, accounts for nothing in the genesis of worlds or of beings. The most that it does is to carry back

the chain of causation for æons instead of centuries. It adds not one whit to the probability of self-originating or self-shaping matter. It shows no material cause for the beginning of organic being, for the upspringing of order from chaos, even if matter were eternal. It finds abundant testimony in nature that there was a beginning of the *cosmos*, a time the worlds were not, and leaves for the only alternative, either what—disguise it as you may in philosophic phrase—is neither more or less than the fortuitous evolution of the universe by an infinite series of happy chances, or its evolution from the will and might of an intelligent First Cause. The latter hypothesis, it is said, is inconceivable. I grant this is so, and I should expect it to be so, if it be true; for in the counsels of Omniscience and the workings of Omnipotence there must be heights and depths which man in the infancy of his being cannot scale or fathom. The former supposition is easily conceivable, and it can be set forth in no form that does not betray its innate inadequacy and absurdity.

But if God be the only possible cause of nature, if without Him the *cosmos* cannot have begun to be, you may take His being as a determinate truth, and I would have you lodge it, not in the guest-chamber, but in the inmost home-apartment of your souls; and you may keep it there if you will only conform your interior life to

it, if you will govern feeling, desire, volition with sacred reference to it, and, above all, if you will recognize it in prayer, which attests its own reality, and brings the Divine communion which it craves.

Nor need this conviction be disturbed by any stranger-guests that you may entertain. Undoubtedly there will be, as there have been, discoveries or interpretations of natural phenomena that at first thought militate with faith in God,—cases in which the world is not ordered precisely as we should order it were it under our control,—cases in which system seems to survive or transcend the need of it, as in the vestiges of organs no longer used,—cases in which inevitable needs seem to have no provision made for them. As to such cavils there are two things to be said,—one, that if there be a disparity of wisdom between the Creator and the critic, there must of necessity be differences of opinion between them; the other, that the existence of the power to criticize in a being with such an ancestry as the critic probably claims for himself, saying to the worm, “Thou art my mother and my sister,” has immeasurably more argumentative force for the being of a Creator than the cavils of all the sceptics since the world began can urge against it.

Another conviction which your souls need as a permanent indweller is a sense of the intrinsic and indelible character of moral acts as right or wrong.

Your own consciousness, if you will give it voice, bears witness to the sanctity and obligation of the immutable, absolute, eternal right. Even were the throne of the universe filled by malign and vicious omnipotence, there is that within you which would defy and scorn its sway. The rebellion of Prometheus, in the Grecian mythology, against the unrighteous majesty of Zeus is but the type of the protest against the intrinsically wrong and evil uttered by every developed and unpervverted human soul. You can no sooner perceive the fittingness of an act than you feel an assurance which cannot be made stronger that its performance is your bounden duty. This sense of the right springs not from reasoning, but is antecedent to it. It comes not from philosophy, but underlies it. It is intuitive, immutable, indestructible. It eludes, indeed, the manipulation of physical science, the scalpel and the microscope, but is none the less real, vital, essential, because they fail to detect and analyze it. You may admit all that they discover and reveal ; for physical psychology has made and will still make contributions to man's knowledge of his own being, of transcendent interest and value. But before the right and its shrine in the inexorable conscience science retreats baffled, or else points with trembling finger in reverent awe to Him who is most to be adored, as in his infinite Godhead the impersonation of the eternal right.

I would crave for Christian faith, also, a perma-

nent home in your souls, and especially because with it God and the eternal right will have their constant indwelling,—without it they may not have room kept for them. The evidences of Chistianity commonly so called, I am not disposed to undervalue for their uses. They are for the most part defensive, and presuppose assault; and I regard them as all that they purport to be. Chistianity has been maligned, its records impugned, its witnesses contradicted; and at every point at which it has been assailed, it has more than held its ground, so that the onslaughts of its enemies have given rise to ample demonstration of the authenticity and genuineness of its claims as an historical religion. But it is its own best evidence, and, however it may be with the speculative intellect, it is only as its own evidence that it can have its rightful place in the heart of man. In those biographies of Jesus called the Gospels, you find the Divine character outlined by him in words worthy to have dropped from heaven on the listening ear of humanity, and the outline filled in and rounded in his life with a majestic sweetness, a loveliness so intense, as to make our warmest recognition of it cold, and to render it no hyperbole, but self-evidencing truth, when he says, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” You find in him, too, the absolute and eternal right, not in precept alone, but still more in form and countenance, in a perfectness of virtue and a beauty of holiness which



make him not brightest among the stars in the moral firmament, but the sun of righteousness in whose light the most resplendent stars grew pale. If you could only forget all that men have said about Christianity, all dogmatic disputes and subtilities, all that has unworthily borne the sacred name, and look to Christ alone, I am sure that he could not fail of your fervent loyalty, service and love,—of a welcome and a home in your heart of hearts.

With God, and the eternal right, and Christ, their image and impersonation, not as transient guests, but as permanent indwellers, you are prepared for a hospitality both broad and wise. These fundamental truths of the spiritual world, as I have said, are not contingent on science, but belong to the higher realm of intuition. They are no more subject to physical tests than is your æsthetic sense, or your poetic feeling, or your love for your mother. The reasons for their reception are not so much before you, as within you, and they can never be less valid than now; and when those truths are once taken, not into the speculative intellect, but into the region of sentiment and affection, and made not beliefs, but loves, principles, motives, they will stay on with you through this earthly life into the life eternal. They, too, will be of essential service to you in discriminating among the guests that may claim your hospitality. Even scientific truth has its spiritual affinities and antipathies; and the instances are not

wanting in which spiritual intuition has been prophet and guide in the most momentous discoveries and generalizations. Indeed, there is hardly an established and universally recognized law of the physical universe which has not had its inception in a mind accustomed to contemplate the universe as pervaded by the present God, and in which faith has not held the torch for science. Faith and reverence will never limit the range of your legitimate inquiry and research. They will leave you free and fearless in the pursuit of truth wherever it may lead you. They will exclude such speculations only as transcend their rightful sphere, and deny the reality of things not seen, because they are not seen,—of the life of principle, love and piety, because it eludes physical analysis,—of the life with and in Christ and God, because its factors cannot be fused in the crucible. This higher, inner, divine life, if once yours, you will not let go. God grant that it be yours.

As you part on your several life-ways, may it be with memories of your life here that shall grow more precious as the years roll on, with friendships that shall become dearer with time and shall ripen into eternity, with a loyalty to the right that shall merit favor with man and win favor with God ; and would to heaven that there might be in every one of you a vivid consciousness of that life of which Jesus says, "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

